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The Shepherd's Voice.

THE
SHEPHERD'S VOICE;

OR,
Words of Encouragement and Words of Warning

FOR THE
EARS OF THE YOUNG.

By R. J. P.

AUTHOR OF "SUNDAY-SCHOOL ILLUSTRATIONS."

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P R E F A C E.

THIS little volume has been prepared to meet a want which we have heard of from various parts of the church. Pastors and superintendents desire something in the form of addresses, which may be read with interest and profit to the assembled Sunday-school. Here are twelve addresses written expressly for this purpose; and written by one engaged practically in the good work which this volume is designed to aid.

The addresses are such as the author is accustomed to give, extemporaneously, to the children of his Sunday-school. He has found the children interested in such addresses, and, as he hopes and believes, profitably instructed by them. Perhaps

there are lambs of other folds who may be benefited by the "words of encouragement and of warning" thus sent forth to them.

The superintendent, or reader to others, should ever bear in mind in this connection, that familiarity with the article to be read, with its character and construction, is an important prerequisite to profitable reading aloud. May the Good Shepherd of us all cause this volume to fulfil His own earnest injunction to us—"FEED MY LAMBS!"

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
1.—CARE-TAKERS.....	9
2.—THE RACERS.....	22
3.—FRAGMENT-GATHERERS.....	32
4.—WALL-LEAPERS—PART I.....	44
5.—WALL-LEAPERS—PART II.....	59
6.—THE BUILDERS.....	73
7.—HEARERS.....	86
8.—TRUTH MERCHANTS—PART I.....	99
9.—TRUTH MERCHANTS—PART II.....	112
10.—THE MINERS.....	124
11.—LINGERERS.....	139
12.—WATCHMEN.....	149

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Care-Takers. •

"The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep."—John x. 13.

WHAT a difference there is between the care exercised by the good shepherd, and that of the mere hireling! The former is bound to his sheep by the cords of a strong and lasting love. While the latter is connected with the sheep over which he is placed, only by the tie of self-interest, which almost any thing can unloose.

When a wolf makes an attack on the sheep, if the shepherd himself is in charge of the flock, he runs to save the poor, helpless creatures, and with his strong arm and shepherd's staff he drives the wolf from the ground, and thus rescues the sheep from all danger. And if it happens that a lamb or sheep has been wounded by the wolf, the shepherd kindly takes the wounded one up in his arms, dresses his torn limb, and tenderly watches over him, and cares for him until he is restored to health and strength.

But not so with the mere hireling. He has no great love for the sheep. *He* cares more for himself than he does for the flock. So when the wolf approaches, the hireling, through fear of harm to himself, runs away, leaving the sheep, both young and old, to take care of themselves. In other words, he leaves them all exposed to the ravages of their enemy.

Now, good shepherds are care-takers. They care for the sheep. They anxiously watch over them. They are ready to protect them, even to the laying down of their life for them, if need be. There is something noble then, about the character of the good shepherd. His is an example worthy of our imitation.

In some respect or other we are all called upon to be shepherds. At least, we all have something to take care of. Now, shall we be care-takers, guarding well what is intrusted to us? Or shall we be careless hirelings, easily persuaded to run away from our duties? Which will *you* be, *teachers*? Which will *you* be, *scholars*?

General Washington was a good shepherd, because he watched faithfully over the interests of the people of the country. He made great self-denials for their good. He fought bravely, and laboured long and nobly for the well-being

of all his people. But General Arnold, of whom you read, showed, by his conduct, that he was but a mere hireling shepherd. The enemy won him over to their side; and for hire he turned to be a traitor, deserting his duties, and trying to sacrifice his country.

Judas was a mere hireling shepherd, for when called to watch over the flock of Christ, he was led, through love of money, to desert the flock, and even to betray its living Head, our blessed Lord and Master. All the other apostles were good shepherds, for they laboured faithfully, and through much suffering, in taking care of the church, and of the truth intrusted to them. They even laid down their lives in defence of the truth, and for the good of those who were the true sheep of the Lord.

Faithful pastors are care-takers. They watch anxiously over the interests of all who are under their charge. They strive to protect them from error, and to lead them in the green pastures, and beside the still waters of revealed truth. They feed them with the bread of life, and care for them "as those who must give an account."

Teachers are care-takers. What good can the Sunday-school teacher do unless careful

in word and deed to promote the interests of those who are intrusted to his care? Can the Sunday-school teacher be careless as to his precepts, or careless as to his example, and yet hope for good to result to those who may be called the members of his little flock? May he be careless as to warning his little ones of the danger to which they are exposed from the world, from Satan, from false teachers, from their own weakness? May he be careless as to pointing them to the fountain of living waters, and urging them to drink and be refreshed. Ah no! Carelessness will not answer. The teacher *must be a care-taker*, or most assuredly his sheep will become wanderers, if they are not indeed devoured by the enemy who ever seeketh their destruction.

Nothing greatly useful is ever accomplished in the world without care-taking. The benevolent John Howard was a care-taker, or he never would have been as useful a man as he became. The great Sir Isaac Newton was a care-taker. Our own great Washington, as I have said, was a care-taker. These all were faithful to the work they had in hand. They were ever watchful, ever actively industrious.

The missionary must be a care-taker, or he

can be of no use. If he is not a man of patience and of courage, but is soon alarmed, or if he is easily led into carelessness of labour and conduct, he "can do no good thing"—he is a missionary only in name. And just so with the Sunday-school teacher. As I said just now, to be useful, he must be careful. Does he want to instruct the mind, or benefit the heart? He must be a care-taker. This is absolutely essential to his exerting influence for good. But, children, your teachers *are* care-takers. They seek your good. For your good they come and instruct you. For your good they labour, and for your good they pray. They want to see you growing up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." They want to have you "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ daily." For this purpose "they watch for your souls." They are care-takers over your best interests. They seek to promote your highest good. And as this is so, dear children, what conduct does it call for from you in regard to those who are care-takers, or teachers, over you? Do you not owe them respect? Do you not owe them love? Do you not owe them obedience? Surely you will not deny your indebtedness or obligations in these respects.

Under God, your parents are your chief care-takers. And to them you owe chief or superior love. But your teachers come in for a portion, and a goodly portion, because of the care they have for you. They want your regard, your confidence, your love: unless you render them these things, they cannot do you good. But if they are care-takers, so should you be. If they take care to teach you, you should take care to learn. If they take care to guide you aright, you should take care aright to follow. If they take care to lead you in the right way, you should take care to be led by them. If they take care to direct you to the waters of life, you should take care to drink thereof and be refreshed. In a word, if your teachers are care-takers as to your instruction and guidance, you certainly should be care-takers as to their teachings, and so as to your own good. If your teachers give their time and their thoughts and labours to instruct and guide you, surely you should give them your cheerful attention. And if you will think of the matter, you will find that this is but a reasonable return for their care.

And then, dear children, *you are, in an important sense, care-takers of each other.* A

great many years ago, there lived a man, who, like too many men since his day, very readily gave way to passion. One day he was very angry with his brother, and yielding to his sinful temper, he became his brother's murderer. No eye of man saw him strike the fatal blow. But the eye that never sleeps saw him. Yes, God saw him, and God called him to an account for the awful deed. He called to him from heaven and asked, "Where is thy brother?" The question startled the murderer, but he put a bold face on the matter and replied, "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" Then the Lord said to him, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." Ah! Cain *should* have been "his brother's keeper." That is, he should have cared for his life, for his honour, and his happiness. He was most fearfully punished for not doing so.

And so each one of you, is a brother's keeper. You are to have respect to your brother's interests as well as to your own. You are to care for one another—guard one another's welfare—and do good to one another as you have oppor-

tunity. That person has a very mean spirit, who loves to be saying evil things of others. We should no more speak evil of others, than of ourselves. We have no more right to be angry at others, or to strike others, than we have to be angry at ourselves, and to strike ourselves. Our Saviour's rule is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And this rule surely makes us all care-takers of each other. Take care, therefore, children, that you do not injure others by what you say about them. And take care that you do not injure others by what you say *before* them. You may teach a younger child improper words by repeating them in his hearing. You may teach him improper acts by doing them before him. And thus you may most seriously injure him, without, indeed, directly intending to do so.

And are you disposed to ask, with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The answer is, Yes, you are, and if you wilfully injure your brother, or companion, the voice of his injury will cry unto God against you. Take care, then, as to what you do, and take care also, as to what you *say*, lest you become like the mere hireling shepherd, careless of the welfare of those around you.

But you are to be care-takers of yourselves, as well as of others. Each one of you is an appointed guardian or care-taker of himself, body and soul. You are bound to take care of your bodily life. Not to expose it unnecessarily to danger, but to protect it to the best of your ability. And so also with the soul. It is the inhabitant of the body. It is intrusted to you to take care of. You are expected to take good care of it; to protect it from injury; to educate and to strengthen it for good. When it is exposed to harm, you are not to run away, like the hireling, but to defend what is your's to take care of.

I remember a kind-hearted, but weak-minded and easily frightened man-servant, who was left one evening in charge of the house. As soon as he was left alone, he fastened all the doors of the house *except one*, which he concluded to leave open, reasoning within himself that if anybody should get in to make an attack on the house, or on him, it would be convenient to have that one *door open for him to run out at and get away*. Sure enough, in a little while, some persons were seen by him walking up the avenue leading to the house. They no sooner gave a loud rap at

the front door, than Jemmy, forgetting, in his fright, that thieves do not often knock, rushed immediately out of the back door, which he had left open, and made his way to a neighbour's, calling out that there was an attack upon the house, and congratulating himself upon his own escape. It so happened that the callers were friends instead of foes, and so no harm was done to his master's house. But there were no thanks due to Jemmy for that. Just when he most needed courage, he had none. Just when he should have been a care-taker, he showed the weak and careless spirit.

Now each child is to be a care-taker of the soul intrusted to him. Enemies in the form of sinful temptations will seek the soul's injury. Sometimes sinful temptations will try to *frighten* you into yielding to their power. And at other times they will try to *allure* or *coax* you away from the true guardianship of your soul. But you must not flee away like the hireling. You must not run to the neighbours for protection, like the servant Jemmy. You must guard your soul. You must stand up for the truth. Instead of fleeing yourself, you must "resist the devil, and *he* will flee from *you*."

It will not do for you to neglect the soul.

You are an appointed care-taker of it. And your neglect will surely be followed by your punishment. Little Emily V. had a young canary-bird given to her, and her joy at her new possession seemed for a time almost unbounded. Every morning she would clean out its beautiful cage, and then put in it fresh supplies of food and water, and many a half-hour through the day would she spend in talking to the bird and in listening to its chirpings. But about a month after she received her bird, she was invited out to spend the day with a young friend that she loved.

With her mind filled with thoughts of the pleasure that was before her at her friend's house, she started off in the morning, altogether forgetful of her canary. Nor did she think of him when she returned at night. The next morning she thought of him, and hastened to the cage. There was nothing to eat in it, and no water to drink; and the bird gave her a languid look that seemed to enter her very heart, as it told her that her dear bird, dependent upon her care, had been suffering in consequence of her neglect. A little longer neglect would have proved fatal to her charge. As a care-taker, her one day's thoughtlessness gave her a valu-

able lesson. Now only think what would be the consequences if He, upon whom we are dependent for food and raiment, and even for the continuance of life from one minute to another, should neglect us for a single day! We could not live if He should neglect us for a single moment! No, if He, our kind Father in heaven, did not constantly provide us with light and air, we must all cease to live. But by his constant care-taking of us, he teaches us how we ought to take care of what he has placed in our trust. And he has given us immortal spirits to take care of and train up for heaven. He has placed teachers over us, indeed, who care for our souls, and for whom we should show our care by our love and obedience. But then your teachers cannot always be with you, and he has made you care-takers of yourselves. He has given to each of you a soul to take care of. Oh, be careful of your trust! Be very careful, lest, by your neglect, some harm come to your souls! Feed the soul every day with the word of God. Seek to have it watered every day with the refreshing grace of the Holy Spirit.

Like a good shepherd, make any denial that may be necessary for the good of the soul.

Think no effort too great, think no denial too severe, that will be for the protection and the strengthening of the soul. When the wolf cometh, "the hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep." But let not this be said of *you*. Let this not be said of *any one* of you, in regard to *any* duty or interest over which you are a care-taker. Love those who are care-takers over you, and obey them in the Lord, seeking to profit all you can from their labours for you. Be faithful care-takers of the interests of all around you. See that you do them no harm! See that, according as God giveth you the ability, you are trying to do good to all. Of your own souls, especially, be faithful, jealous care-takers, for if He "who careth for you," sees you caring for yourselves, in the way of trying to live as He would have you live, then will He be indeed your Good Shepherd, and you shall be the dear lambs of His fold, both in this world and in the "brighter fields" of the world to which we go. May the Good Shepherd in heaven grant you all these blessings, for His name's sake. Amen.

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The Racers.

"So run, that ye may obtain."—1 Cor. ix. 24.

CHILDREN :—You sometimes, in your sports, run races. And when you do, no doubt the desire of each one of you who runs, is, "*so to run as to obtain.*" Therefore, you enter into the race with spirit, and you endeavour to persevere to the end. You do not like to be beaten in the race. You do not like to fail of winning the prize—even though the prize be nothing more than your gratification in being victor. You want to win, or obtain; and this desire to obtain the victory makes you careful how you run. It animates you to put forth all your strength, and it enables you to "hold on"—even though others "give out."

Now, there is a race which you all ought to be running, male and female—from the oldest down to the youngest of you. There are not too many of you for it. No. There is room

enough for you all—and there are hundreds, and thousands of others who are to run, or are running in the race with you. Nor need you fear that you cannot gain the prize *because* there are so many racers. The prize is a glorious mansion, to be enjoyed for ever. Something far more beautiful and grand than any mansion, you have ever seen. A mansion far more glorious than any we can describe to you. And then it may be enjoyed by all who “run with diligence the race set before them”—“persevering unto the end.” Will you run? Will you become racers for the glorious mansion? If so—listen attentively to what we have now to tell you about the race.

First, then: *You must understand the rules respecting it.* When St. Paul says in our text—“So run that you may obtain”—he is writing to Christians about the Christian life. He means to tell men that they must so run in the Christian faith, as that they will be sure to gain an entrance into the Christian’s heavenly home. But he takes his illustrations from one of the customs of the Greeks near Corinth, who trained their youth in hardy sports and exercises. They had races—and the young men who ran in them exerted all their strength to

win the prize. The prize, generally, was a garland of evergreen, with which the victor was crowned. But do you suppose that anybody could join in the race without regard to preparation for it? Do you think it would answer for them simply to stop their ordinary work, or play, for the time, and run for the prize? By no means. It was not so trifling a matter. They must be trained for the race. Sometimes whole years of discipline were required. Their food, and their clothing, and their preparatory exercises were all to be attended to. These things were all matters of rule or regulation, and they must conform to the rules, or there would be no hope of their so running as to obtain.

And then there were white lines marked along the ground, and the racers must all keep within the limits prescribed by those white lines—or else fail of obtaining any reward. They must understand the rules therefore, and conform to them, if they would run well. Now there are white lines all along our life—lines which we must see, and understand, and observe. *Truth* is such a line. And *Honesty* is another. And *Love* is another. And we must be careful not to overstep these lines,

but always to stay within their limits, if we would win the prize of good behaviour.

To gain the heavenly prize—a home in the “happy land, far, far away”—we must understand the rules or lines which mark out the pathway in which we are to run. Trust in Jesus secures to us the prize—and we are to show our trust in him by our obedience to his holy will. His word teaches us his will. Therefore we must carefully *read his word*, in order that we may know what he would have us do. Suppose a little girl goes to school without knowing where her lessons are, is she running so as to obtain? Or suppose she does not know what time school begins, is she then likely to run so as to obtain? Suppose I put up a prize; say a nice book, to be given upon certain conditions which I am careful to mention. Now, if you pay no attention to these conditions—do not even remember what they are—can you expect to obtain the prize? Children, we obtain no prizes in life—no “good name”—no worthy character—without attention to the rules on which the possession of these things depends. First then—and all-important in the race or races of life—is *knowledge of the rules*. In other words—if you

would “so run as to obtain”—you must run *understandingly*.

But we said, also, that *zeal* was necessary in the race. Is this always required? Yes, in every race but the sluggard’s—in it, however, he beats who has the least zeal. I mean by zeal, an *earnest* spirit, that “presses forward” toward the prize, desiring and determined to gain it. Now, suppose the racers on the race-ground—to which St. Paul refers—should all start off when the signal is given, and should all see the white lines and keep within them, but yet one should commence to talk, and another to laugh, and another to read, and perhaps another to smoke, what kind of a race would that be? Would they be running as though they hoped to obtain? They would show a want of zeal, a want of real interest or devotion in the race; and without this characteristic they could not so run as to obtain.

How often, when a boy is sent on an errand, will he stop to play ball, or marbles, or something else by the way. When he does so, is he so running as to obtain? Suppose a farmer employs a man to plough his orchard lot. But the man is lazy—feels no real interest in doing the work speedily and well. So

he stops at almost every tree he meets. Here he stops to eat an apple, and there he stops to eat a fine peach, and a little farther on he sees some delicious plums, and must needs "hold up" and eat a few of them. Does he run *so as to obtain*? He may obtain his full of fruit, but he certainly does not get much work done—does not obtain the prize, or fulfil the requirement for which he professed to commence. It will not do for him thus to work, or rather thus to stop working, if he would gain the character of a good workman. It will not do for the merchant, instead of waiting on his customers, to be spending his time in walking, talking, or sporting. Nor will it do for you, children, with minds to educate and develop, to be slighting your books and other means of instruction. And as you have immortal souls to train for happiness and heaven—oh, it will not do for you to be careless about them! You must not slight the good lessons you get from good books and good friends—you must not "slumber and sleep" in regard to heavenly things, when you ought to be awake and active in running the race that is set before you! No. To live here as God would have us live, and then hereafter to dwell with him in hea-

ven, this surely is "*a good thing*," and the Scriptures tell us that "*it is good to be zealously affected in a good thing*." We are not told so to *walk* as to obtain, but to "*so run as to obtain*." We are not told to go along leisurely toward the mark, but to "*press toward the mark for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*." We are not told to *cherish some desire* to enter in at the strait gate, but to "*strive to enter in at the strait gate*." And be assured, that if you would enjoy the blessing of God here and for ever, you must show some zeal, some active interest in loving and serving the Lord, and so in securing his heavenly blessing. Heavenly things are worth your chief, your deepest interest. Give them that interest, and they shall be your's.

But there is one more characteristic necessary in a good race. What is it? *It is perseverance!* How would it do for the racers all to stop after running a little while—one to sit down and another to lie down and rest? Did you ever read the story of the rabbit and the turtle? It is something like this:—A rabbit and a turtle set out to run a race. The rabbit laughed at the idea of a turtle running a race with him, and so he ran on about half-way and

then lay down in the sun to take a nap, thinking he could get up at any time and beat the turtle. But Master Turtle kept on at his slow but steady rate, and after a while he came up to where Master Rabbit was sleeping, and he passed by without waking him up, and got on to the end of the race just before Master Rabbit came bouncing in. So the turtle beat the rabbit. And thus it is that perseverance will beat impulses, or that the faithful persevering child, or man, will always beat those who walk or work only by fits and starts.

To accomplish any thing great you must work perseveringly. It is easier for many persons to go to sleep over a lesson than it is to learn it; but it is not half so good or useful. A boy does not grow into a man, nor a girl into a woman in a single day. Gradual, steady growth is required. I once heard of a little girl, who, getting hold of a bottle of bear's grease, rubbed herself all over with it one night, and then went to bed as proud as could be, thinking she would wake up in the morning a full-grown woman. But she was mistaken, and was not a great while in finding it out. Now, as the body, when in good health, grows slowly and steadily, so

ought the mind, and so ought the heart to grow in knowledge and in love. To gain the good prize of the favour and love of God, do not expect to *jump into* it at your pleasure. If you are Christian children, and are really desirous of serving the Lord and being with him for ever, do not depend upon occasionally serving him. Do not depend upon growths of a night. Try all the time to serve him. Persevere in your endeavours to live as the Lord would have you live. On Sundays or through the week, at home or abroad, at school, or in the street, or wherever you are, remember you must not deny the Lord. You must not disobey him. You must not be careless of his word and worship, but persevere in running the race,—the Christian race—which is set before you. “Be not weary in well doing,” young friend. If you are seeking the Lord, seek on. He will be found by those who truly seek him. You are old enough, quite old enough, for he says, “They that seek me *early* shall find me.” Be not discouraged then. I know that you have fallen from your resolutions or purposes. But then persevere in prayer and in the endeavour to trust all to the Saviour, who knows your wants and careth

for you. It is not night always. The day dawns after the longest night, and the sun appears and there is beauteous light. And so it will be with you. The Lord Jesus is a gracious, and an all-sufficient Saviour. Trust in him. "Wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart." Is there no such an one here as we have just been addressing? We would fain hope that there is at least one of you seeking the Lord, desiring to be His, and that you will be encouraged to give yourself away to him, and, as his, to persevere unto the end.

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Fragment Gatherers.

'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.'—John vi. 12.

WHAT an important lesson is taught us here, dear children! A lesson of frugality! And it is taught us by our blessed Lord, who had every thing under his command. Of five loaves and two small fishes, he made food sufficient to satisfy the hunger of a whole multitude of persons, containing five thousand men. And after all had "eaten and were filled," there was something left! Broken pieces, or fragments, were left after all the multitude had had enough to eat. What was to be done with the broken victuals? The disciples might think it was not worth while to save them, because their Lord could always provide for them when in need.

But the Lord would not allow his disciples to be wasteful. They must not suppose that he will provide for them, unless they try to provide for themselves. They must not suppose

that their Lord will take care of them, unless they take care of what he gives them. They must not waste the fragments, and expect their Lord always to give them loaves. No, they must be saying of what is provided for them. They must make the best possible use of what they have. The bread that Jesus made for the multitude was made to be eaten, and not to be wasted. Jesus would have his disciples bear this in mind; and so he said to them, "*Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*" They gathered up twelve baskets full: and probably Jesus and his disciples made many a meal of those pieces. If they did not eat them, no doubt they were given to some needy family, who would be very glad to have such a portion from the Lord.

No doubt, children, you sometimes think that you would like to have lived in the days when our blessed Lord was upon earth, and in the country where he lived, that you might have witnessed some of his wonderful works and heard some of the gracious words that fell from his lips. If you ever do think so, just bear in mind, that as you suppose you would then gladly have followed him, even so now should you try to follow him. As you think you would then

surely have obeyed him, even so should you endeavour to obey him now. If you had been one of the disciples of Jesus when he worked the miracle of feeding the multitude, and he had bidden you help to "gather up the fragments that remained, that nothing be lost," would you not cheerfully and carefully have obeyed his bidding?

There is a way of ascertaining whether you would have obeyed him or not. It is by seeing whether you now try or not to obey him. There is now a work in fragment-gathering for you to engage in. I wonder if you are now all of you fragment-gatherers. If I could spend a whole day with each of you—and see just exactly how you live—what time you get up in the morning—and how diligently or how carelessly you attend to your several duties—and what kind of a spirit you show to those around you—and how you feel and act toward the poor that live near you—and what you do with the pennies that are given to you,—if I could thus see all of your acts for a single day, I should be able to say very correctly whether or not you are fragment-gatherers.

There are different kinds of fragments to be gathered; and you are the young disciples

who should be actively engaged in the work. Attend now, while two or three of the kinds of fragments you should be gathering are spoken of.

FRAGMENTS OF TIME, children, are before you. *Gather them up.* Do not allow them to be wasted. Minutes are fragments of time. How many of them did you waste this morning in bed? Suppose you go to your bed-sides now, and try to pick up the fragments of time you left there—could you find them? If you lose half an hour, you drop thirty fragments from that day's slice of time—and can you pick them up again? Can you find them? Can you gather those dropped fragments of time? Oh no. It is a solemn thought, that if you once drop them, they are lost. You can never gather them up again.

But then there are fragments of time yet before you, which you may gather up, or improve; and you must give your attention to these. You must be watchful and careful in the future. Of a summer's morning, even before you get your breakfast, by looking around in the yard, perhaps you will see a group of little ant-hills. Try to count the tiny particles of sand of which one of those hills is composed. It would

be a hopeless task. It would take you longer to count the particles than it did the little labourers to heap them up. And yet each little grain was a load carried up and put in its place by the active little workmen you see there engaged. Their work was not commenced when you went to bed. Ah, they must then have been up and at work early in the morning. Yes. They took sleep—sleep enough for them. But they did not waste the fragments of the morning. By no means. They gathered them up and used them—and the fragments of time which they thus improved—and perhaps you wasted—might be numbered by the particles of sand of which their hill is composed.

Lucy Minutedropper loses at least an hour every day, just by not gathering up or improving the fragments of time. She does not do things promptly. She loses time in bed, by not getting up as soon as she is called. She loses time in hunting for her books, because they were not put away properly. She loiters on the way to school, and again on the way home. And then, though she has had her time for play and made use of it, yet when the time for study or work arrives, she is careless, allows herself to be thinking of other things rather

than the duty before her, and so her minutes drop to the ground without her thinking of the value of what she is losing.

Now, children, if you lose an hour of time every day, in a single week the minute-fragments amount to four hundred and twenty; and the second-fragments thus lost amount to twenty-five thousand and two hundred! Why, here are "twelve baskets full" of fragments at least lost every week. If you had them now all before you, how long they would last you! How much you might learn in them! Or, how much good you might do with them!

Remember, then, in your hours for play, enter into and enjoy your recreations. But in your hours for study or work, lose no time. Engage thoughtfully and earnestly in the duties before you. And you all have "odds and ends" of time that you might improve to great advantage. You have enough of these every week to enable you always to have your Sunday-school lesson well studied. There is not one of you that should not be ashamed to say to your teacher, as an excuse for not knowing the lesson given you, "I had not time to learn it."

Not time! Why, you have time for every

thing, that God requires of you. You waste more time perhaps than the wise Franklin had, when an apprentice-boy, in which to acquire his knowledge, for he used to save the fragments of candles, and use them in the fragments of the night, in his search for the treasures of instruction. You have time for study, time for work, time for play, time for carrying food to the hungry, or clothing to such as you may know to be in need. You have time for reading God's holy word every day. Time for prayer for his blessing and guidance. Time for the improvement of your mind, and time for the improvement of your heart. Time for every thing that is rightly demanded of you. Only—only you must *“gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.”* You might attend to all your regular duties and pleasures of the day, and then gather up for God, or for the learning of his will, the fragments that remain. Be careful then of your fragments of time. Gather them up in the morning. Gather them up through the day. Gather them up in the evening. Gather them up now in the morning of your days, and you will find in after-life that you have saved full twelve baskets of time-fragments, which will

afford you comforts and joys, the loss of which many now sadly mourn.

But you should be fragment-gatherers of other things, as well as of your time. *The food and the clothing provided for you, you have no right to waste.* You should be careful in their use. You owe it to those who furnish these things for you, and you owe it to yourselves, to be frugal and saving with what you have. Many a poor child might be fed and clothed with the food and clothing that many other children now destroy in carelessness. You remember the story of Lazarus, who lay at the rich man's gate, do you not? All that he asked for was "the crumbs," or fragments, "that fell from the rich man's table." Perhaps there is some needy Lazarus not far from your gate, who would be thankful for the fragments that you might easily save and take to him. Look about you, and see if you cannot find such a needy one, and be able to minister to his wants.

But especially, children, *you should be careful to gather up or save up the fragments of money that may be given to you, or that you may earn.*

If you spend your pennies foolishly, they are soon gone, and do no good to you or to

others. But if you save them for the poor, or to send God's truth to the ignorant, then, when you thus give them away, they are not wasted. They do good to yourselves, and good to others also. There is a satisfaction in doing good. And this gratification you may have, children, with the fragments of money that perhaps you now foolishly spend or waste. Only think of the many children in our Western land, and in heathen lands, who have none of the blessed Sunday-school privileges, none of the gracious gospel instruction that you now enjoy! Oh, what happiness it would give to them to learn of Jesus the Saviour! To learn to read his word, sing his praise, and trust in him!

And would you not like to be the means of imparting some of this happiness to those who now have it not? If so, save your fragments of money, for these may be sufficient to do much good with. Fragments count up, when they are saved. You know the old maxim, "Take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves;"—which means, save up cents and you will be saving up dollars—for cents turn into a dollar when one hundred of them are together. Why, in one year, not

long ago, "the children of the Methodist Society, in England, brought into the missionary fund nearly two millions of pennies, or nearly twenty thousand dollars, to send the gospel to the heathen."

So you see that pennies amount to something when saved. Let me tell you that one cent a week from each member of a small school of fifty scholars, will, in a single year, amount to enough money to buy over a hundred Bibles, or over four hundred New Testaments, or some thirty-eight thousand pages of good reading. And oh, what light of truth this might carry into some dark spot of ignorance and sin! Be encouraged, then, to think that your fragments gathered up, will, in the end, amount to much. And you can be earning pennies for this work. You can make some self-denial, or you can engage in some work by which you may earn fragments of dollars for the missionary cause—which is the cause of Christ.

I once heard of a little boy, who to get some pennies with which to send the Bible to the heathen, used to go out and gather wool from the thickets and hedges where the sheep had been. He could only get what they had rubbed

off, but by going daily he gathered enough in a little while to give him a considerable sum, which he gladly contributed to the good object he had so much at heart.

Nor was this all of it. The story of what that boy did was related in a Sunday-school, where there was a little girl, who, as she heard it, resolved that she would do something also in order to earn some money. On going home she commenced thinking of a plan; and, as “where there is a will, there is a way”—she, having the will, soon found out a way. She lived in the country, but there were not many sheep where she lived, and no hedges near to pull the wool off. But there were a good many chickens and geese about the farm. So early the next morning, after she had heard about the little boy and the wool, this little girl started around the farm-yard, picking up quills and feathers. She found a good many, and every morning would find some more, which were dropped from the geese and chickens. It was not long before, just by this work, she gathered enough to enable her to bring a whole handful of pennies to her teacher, and asked him to send them to the heathen.

Now, my young fragment-gatherers, think

of the things we have told you to-day, and see what you can do for your own good and the good of others, by gathering up the fragments that remain. Gather up the fragments of time that you may have, and improve them to your own advancement in knowledge and true wisdom. Endeavour to make the very best use of all the gracious privileges that a God of love now surrounds you with. Let nothing be lost. Have hearts of love and hands of love for the wants of the needy you may meet with; and the pennies you can earn, or that may be placed at your disposal, let them not be dropped in the drawer of the confectioner, but gather them up and give them to the Lord, to the sending abroad over the earth the rich blessings of his holy word. And may God bless you with his pardoning love and renewing grace, and make you his accepted and useful children, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

Wall Leapers.

PART I.

“For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.”—2 Sam. xxii. 30.

You will find these same words recorded in the twenty-ninth verse of the eighteenth Psalm. In each case the words are the words of David—and they are uttered or written by him to commemorate his deliverance from the power of his enemies. A whole troop of his enemies surrounded him, desiring to take him captive, or put him to death. But he was enabled to “*run through the troop*”—or break through their ranks—and escape. They surrounded him like a strong wall—but, as he afterward describes it, “*by my God have I leaped over a wall.*” David well knew that in his own strength alone he could not thus have escaped from the power of his enemies. He acknowledges the guidance and strength of the Lord. And while rejoicing at his own deliver-

ance, he yet praises God for it—saying, “*For by thee I have run through a troop : by my God have I leaped over a wall.*”

Now, children, how like a troop do our enemies come sometimes and surround us! But we must not despair. No. In the strength which God will give us, if we seek and trust Him, we must “*run through the troop.*” We *can* do it. We *ought* to do it. And we shall find it, as David did, an occasion of rejoicing, if we succeed.

Sometimes the difficulties that our enemies put in our way may seem to form a strong and high wall all around us. We see no way of escape. Now, what shall we do? Sit down and cry? That will not help the matter any. No—we must do just what David did, “*Leap over the wall.*” If we run vigorously up to it, determined to leap over, we shall not find it so high as we thought it was. Now remember—when an enemy builds a wall around you, and you see no outlet or door through which to escape, you must just nerve yourselves up by prayer, and thus rely upon God, and then *bound forward* with determination and trust, and *leap over the wall*. David did so. And you can do so. And if you do, it will be an occasion of rejoicing and thanksgiving with you ever after.

But mind, it is not *every* wall that we are to leap over. Is it *always* an occasion of rejoicing to have leaped over a wall? I think not. It depends upon circumstances; and as one very important circumstance connected with it, I may mention that *it depends very much upon what is on the other side of the wall, whether we shall have occasion to rejoice or not.*

For instance, I remember once reading of a distinguished prisoner who was confined in a room, one side of which was the outer wall of the prison. One day a visitor brought to him an instrument with which to cut his way through the wall, and a rope with which to let himself down, telling him that some friends had provided these things for his escape. The prisoner, as he had opportunity, went to work, and in due time he made a hole in the wall, large enough for him to crawl through. At night he secured one end of his rope in the room, passed the other out of the hole he had made, then got out, and let himself down the rope. The cool air was pleasant to him, and thoughts of liberty were pleasanter still. He reached the end of the rope, and was about to let go, when he found that his feet did not reach the ground. It was very dark, so that he could distinguish nothing;

but he supposed that the ground could not be more than a foot or two below him, and that his friends had made a slight mistake in the length of the rope sent him. Shall he let go his hold or not? It was a moment of awful suspense to him. Just then his hat fell from his head. He listened, and could not hear his hat strike the ground. The thought flashed across his mind that his *destruction*—not his liberty—had been sought; and exerting his well-nigh wasted strength, he drew himself up again to his prison-room. Anxiously did he wait for the morning light, and then he discovered that he had indeed been well-nigh destroyed, for had he let go of the rope, he would have been dashed to pieces upon the rocks which lay in a deep dike, far below the reach of the rope which had been furnished him. “An enemy had done it,” plotting his ruin. And so it is, children, that there are some walls it will not do for us to leap over; for if we do, we leap into misery or ruin.

There is now around most if not all of you *the wall of parental restraint*. Will it do for you to leap over it? Have you any *right* to leap over it? Alas, how many children do leap over this wall, and rejoice in the liberty which they gain! But oh, what kind of liberty do they

gain? Only liberty in sin. And who wants this? Who would be willing to have a high wall between himself and his kind parents? And this simply that he may sin on without their restraining him! None of you, I hope. Therefore let none of you leap over *the wall* of *paternal restraint*. God has placed it around you for your good. He made the wall for you, and he tells you about it in the fifth commandment. What is it?

Then *there is the wall of honesty*. Who has a right to leap over it? Has any one? And yet how many do leap over it! They get something for it, and they rejoice perhaps in its possession. But oh! they forget how much they lose. They do not think of how much their ill-gotten gains really cost them. If a boy should take off his good coat and sell it for a cent, he would gain more than the boy who takes off the coat of his good character and sells it for a dollar, or for any number of dollars. He who leaps over the wall of honesty, loses, in the very act, that which is worth infinitely more to him than any thing he can possibly gain by it.

Though the strongest temptations should lie on the other side of the wall, and although you should really be *in want* of what is there, yet never, *never*, my young friends, *be induced to leap*

over the wall of honesty. If you make the leap, you lose by it respect of yourself, the confidence of friends, the love of God. You *risk* your happiness for time and for eternity.

Then there is the wall of truthfulness. This wall is much the same with that of honesty. To tell an untruth, is to be dishonest in word. To *act* an untruth, is to be dishonest in deed. No one has a right to tell an untruth. Therefore he does wrong when he leaps over the wall of truthfulness. No matter how low the wall may seem to be. Though it should appear to be so low that you could step over it without disturbing any one, or without any one knowing it, yet step over it *you must not*.

And remember, that you *cannot* step over it, or leap over it *without God seeing you*. It is right that this wall should be around you. It is put around you by God, who loves you. It is designed to protect you. Leap over it, and you leap into error and misery. A child that disregards the truth is directly exposed to all manner of evil—and indeed, is on the way to all manner of evil. Once over this wall of truthfulness, and a child will soon be over any other wall that stands in the way of the objects of its desire. And no one loves such a child.

Those who were once his companions say of him, "He is outside of the wall of truthfulness, and we cannot associate with him." How sad to have such a character! And yet such a character you must have, my child, if you will leap over this wall of truthfulness which God has established for your good.

Then there is the wall of obedience. Submissive, cheerful obedience, we mean, to *all* in *authority over you*. An orderly mind regards this wall wherever it is seen, and desires not to leap over it. With others, it is a wall constantly overleaped.

Some children will mind their father, but pay very little regard to obedience when spoken to by their mother. Other children are obedient when spoken to by their parents, but seem to think obedience quite another matter when spoken to by their *teacher*. With some it "goes against the grain" to mind any one. Others can mind those that they particularly love. While still others there are, we are glad to say, who consider that obedience is the same thing, so far as they are concerned, no matter who gives the requirement, so that it comes from any rightful authority. Respect for their superiors in age or in wisdom, is a law to which

they will be obedient. They see that they are placed in various relations of life, and that in them each they have particular duties to perform, and obedience to render—and the voice of parents or pastor or teachers is to them a wall of obedience over which they would not leap.

And such children as these last mentioned are happy children. The disobedient child is never a happy child. He has not the happiness within him which arises from doing right: and then he has not the same sources of happiness around him that others have; for people do not like disobedient children: they consider them *spoiled* children, and are not ready to give them a welcome greeting. And *God* does not like such. No, he has placed us under parents, pastors, teachers, and guardians; and he would have us bear in mind that when we are disobedient to their proper requirements we are sinning against him. He has placed the wall around us, and we must not leap over it; we must not be insubordinate. We must not disregard the laws of the land, or the laws of the household, or the laws of the school, or any of the good laws under which God in his providence has placed us. If we do, we are rebellious.

We are like Adam, when he so grievously disobeyed, and so sadly fell. Or like the angels who in heaven were disobedient, and so were expelled from the courts of glory and sent to the abodes of wo.

In obedience to God, and those under whom God has placed us, we are doing right, and will be blessed. In disobeying, we “leap over a wall” to our certain injury.

But again. *There is the wall of love.* And this is the last of the walls I shall specify, over which you are not to leap.

The wall of love! How large it is. It embraces us all. At least it is large enough to enclose us all, and if we would only all stay within it, we should find room enough, and as much happiness as room.

But some people have their moral health so disordered that they cannot bear the atmosphere of love; and so they are ever ready to get out of the way of its influence. Others, and the greater number, allow themselves to be taken by surprise; and without thought, in a fit of passion, they leap over the wall of love. Anna —, who is not very careful to control her temper, leaped over the wall of love, in the street, last Sunday, on her way home from church. Shall

I tell you how it was? Why she had just started from the church on her way home, when her little sister, who had been detained a minute or two by the crowd, ran up to her and endeavoured to take hold of her hand. Anna had forgotten to wait for her sister, and was not thinking about her, and she was so startled by the touch of her hand that she loosed her hold upon her new Bible she was carrying, and it fell into the dirt and was soiled.

Now her little sister was in no way to blame for this. But Anna was thoughtless. She was angered, and leaped right over the wall of love, and from the other side of it began reproaching or scolding her little sister severely. They walked on home together, but the wall was between them all the way. And Anna did not get back on the right side of this wall, until her mother, who was told all the circumstances, talked to her and prayed with her, and convinced her of her folly and sin. But she did see her error, and then she leaped back over the wall, and kissed her little sister, asking her forgiveness, which was gladly granted.

Now how foolish it is, and how sinful, for any one to get into a passion and leap over this wall of love! And yet what a common thing it is!

Have you never felt, my child, that there was at times a great wall between you and one of your companions? Or perhaps between you and your sister, or brother? You have allowed yourself to get angry at one of them, for some trifling cause or other, and then you could not approach them as you used to do. If it is your brother toward whom you have become angered, there seems to be something between you that you cannot overcome. You feel that you cannot go and take him by the hand, or ask a favour of him in as simple confidence as you could have done but a little while before. Something separates you from him. What is it? Do you not know what it is? By your anger you have leaped over *the wall* of love, and this wall is now actually between you and your brother. Now this wall must be broken down. Rather, you must leap back again on to the side of it where you were before your passion. Do not let pride or any sin keep you from doing this. Over with you! Your brother is ready to receive you when you thus go to him acknowledging your error, and proving to him that you are on the same side of the wall that he is.

If you have *both* of you, by anger, leaped over the wall of love, then, although you are on

the same side of the wall, yet you cannot be happy there, for there is no happiness where there is no love. You must both be sorry. You must both repent. You must both of you leap back upon the sunny side of the wall, where love will animate your hearts with peace and happiness.

And so should it be in regard to all your companions or associates in life. Keep on the side of love respecting them. If any of them leap over from you, do not follow them, for then you will both be wrong, and you know very well that "two wrongs do not make a right." No,—when they leap over the wall, you must not leap over after them. You must remain on the right side, and pleasantly call to them to come back. Briers and thorns grow on the other side, and your companions will soon get tired of them, and if you remain on the side where all the flowers are, they will soon join you.

Now, children, remember, it is not a matter of rejoicing *simply to have leaped over a wall*. It depends upon what the wall is, or who placed it around us. If it is a wall that God has placed around us in his holy word, then you cannot jump over it without great injury. If

you leap over "the wall of parental restraint," you leap at once into the mire of sin and unhappiness.

If you leap over "the wall of honesty," or over "the wall of truthfulness," or over "the wall of obedience," you leap into the by-ways of endless error; and if you leap over "the wall of love," you leap into the briars and thorns of sinful passion.

These things will all result in your sad, sad injury. Most earnestly then do we entreat you to "look before you leap." Watch well all your actions, to see that you are not getting over some wall with which God has kindly surrounded you.

Are you tempted to violate the Lord's day? Be careful then, for you are tempted to leap over the solid and holy wall of the fourth commandment!

Are you tempted to take God's holy name in vain? And is the profane word just rising to your mouth, or just hanging on your tongue? Be careful! Oh, be careful! Think what you are doing, actually leaping over the holy wall which God has established in the third commandment.

Whatever the Lord requires of you, dear

children, whether it respect a duty you owe directly to him, such as love to him, or prayer to him, or trust in the merits of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, or whether it respects a duty you owe to those around you in life,—whatever the Lord requires of you, constitutes a wall over which you are not to leap.

Now do not think that you are prisoners, without liberty, because I have shown you walls that are placed around you, within the limits of which you must remain. No, you have liberty enough, only you have no liberty to sin. If you want exercise in the way of leaping over walls, which will test your courage and strength, there are plenty of walls for you to overcome.

I shall endeavour to show you some of these at a future time. You will be at liberty to leap over *them*, because they were established by your enemies. Indeed, you *must* leap over *them*. It is your duty to do so. God requires it of you. As I have already said, you must always “look before you leap.” And, to conclude, let the truth be impressed upon your minds, that whatever is ordained of God for your control, is a wall you may not pass over. But whatever influence is around you which is

not of God, but of sin, you may and should "leap over." And as you are weak, dear children, too weak in yourselves, either to observe what God commands of you, or to break away from what he bids you leave, you must seek the promised "all-sufficient grace." The strength you need is in our blessed Lord and Saviour; and your ground of confidence in looking to him for his strength, is in his own words, addressed to you, "*Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*"

Wall Leapers.

PART II.

"For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall."—2 Sam. xxii. 30.

I HAVE told you, children, that there are some walls around us, or correct principles of action, like strong walls established by the Lord for our protection, over which we have no right to leap. Can you mention any of the walls to which we have already referred? I hope you will long remember them, and always try to live within their enclosure. The garden that has not a strong fence or wall around it, is not good for much. It will soon be destroyed. And so the character that is not protected by the strong walls of honesty and truthfulness and obedience, and love, is not good for much—is not worth having.

But the Psalmist, David, is in our text rejoicing that "by the help of his God he had

leaped over a wall." Now as he was a good man, he must certainly have been doing what was right, or he would not thus be found rejoicing at a remembrance of it. What had he done? Why, he had broken away from his enemies who were seeking his ruin. There was a whole troop of them around him, but, in reliance upon Divine strength, he "ran through" them. They were like a strong wall around him, but "by the help of his God" he leaped over the wall and escaped.

Now, children, here is an example for you. You must do just what David did. You must learn to leap, and you must not be afraid to "*leap over a wall*" when circumstances require it. And it is required of you now, as much as it was of David at the time to which he refers in the text. Do you say that there is no wall of enemies around you? I am not so sure of that.

There is the wall of evil associates. Is not this around some of you? And what a strong wall it is! When a boy gets into evil company, how hard it is for him to get out again! Bad companions have got hold of him, and they have no idea of letting him go. They want to make him one of their own number, and they

know that if he will only stay with them, he will soon do as they do.

I was passing around among the boys of a House of Refuge, on one occasion, and began to question some of them. To a bright-looking little fellow, about twelve years old, I put the question, "Why, my lad, what brought you into this place?" With scarcely a moment's hesitation, but without raising his eyes up to me, he replied, "*I got into bad company.*" I did not press him for any further explanation. His answer was sufficient for my purpose. But I could not help thinking of the little fellow as allured by evil companions, away from the restraints of a pleasant and perhaps a Christian home, only to find his feet "entangled in the net they had privily laid for him." I made similar inquiries of three or four others of the boys, and in each case received, in substance, the same answer. I was convinced that in neither of these cases was I talking with a "ring-leader" in crime, but with those who had been drawn away, step by step, from home-influences, induced to "leap over the wall of parental restraint," and then led into crime, for which they were soon arrested, and shut up to mourn over and I trust repent of their folly and

sin. Now if they had only leaped over the “wall of their evil companions” they would not have been shut up within the walls of their place of confinement. They supposed they were enjoying liberty, when with their companions they spent their evenings in the street, in acts of mischief, and soon in petty crime. But how mistaken! Liberty with evil companions! There is no such thing as liberty *with* them. The only way to get liberty is to go *from* them. And to do this you must “leap over the wall” that they place around you. Companions who disobey their parents, or who disregard the truth, or who swear, or profane the Lord’s day, are *evil* companions, and are to be avoided. Keep on the opposite side of the wall from them. That is, do not choose them as your associates, nor allow any such one to choose you as his companion. If you have any such companions now, any whose influence over you is bad, get away from them. “Leap over the wall.” It is the only way of safety for you. It requires some courage to do this, and some strength I know. But you can have this courage and strength, where David had his, in *the Lord*. He will always strengthen you to do what is right, if you ask Him, and then *try*.

Perhaps there is a youth now listening to these words, who *knows* that he is to a great extent under the influence of evil associates. If so, we want you, my young friend, to make a resolute leap, for your own good. Do not say, "I will get out of their company by little and little." This will not answer. They will see you trying to *climb* over the wall, or trying to *crawl* over, and they will catch you by the legs and pull you back again. The only way for you is to go over at a "leap," and if you do this you may ever after have occasion to rejoice, as David did, saying, "By the help of my God have I leaped over a wall."

The right of selecting associates, or particular friends, is a right which each one possesses, and ought with judgment to use. A boy may not select the persons that he will meet with on his way to school. He may not be able to say who shall sit in the same room with him or recite in the same class with him, any more than who shall live in the same street that he lives in. But he may say who he will from choice associate with. He *must* determine who are to be his particular friends. He must select some, and put, as it were, a wall of restraint between himself and others. Now what is to regulate

his choice? What is to determine him in his selection? We know what *should*. We can tell you in one word. CHARACTER! So far as particular intercourse is concerned, let a good character be that which shall control him in his choice of companions; and while he must not *hate* any one, yet he may *avoid* many. In the matter of companionship he should consider that there is a wall between him and those whose influence is evil. You may be tempted to join evil associates by reason of the sport or enjoyment they promise you. But companionship with them *must injure you*. It is a sure declaration, that "evil communications corrupt good manners," and the only way to avoid corruption from that which is defiled is to avoid, as far as possible, all contact with it. Respecting evil associates, hear the voice of the Lord saying to you, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

But, my young friends, I have other walls to tell you about and urge you to leap over, besides that formed by evil associates.

The wall of sinful or bad habits.

It is harder to get over this than it is to get over the other I have mentioned. Habit is called "our second nature." To try to run

away from a bad habit is almost like trying to run away from yourself. To attempt to leap over a bad habit is almost like attempting to leap over your own shadow. It is not really as difficult, because it is not *really impossible*.

If it was *utterly impossible* for you to leap over the walls of bad habits, we should not urge you to attempt it. But it requires effort, determined effort. And it requires you to do it as David leaped over the wall of his enemies, "by the help of God." I will mention some of these walls, to show you what I mean by the walls of sinful and bad habits.

There is the wall of indolence. This encloses a great many, and keeps them prisoners. There are boys and girls who have the very best advantages, but who never make any real advancement, because of mere carelessness or indolence. They grow in stature and in years, because they cannot help themselves. If their physical growth depended simply upon their own exertions, they would ever be dwarfish. They do not grow wiser or better in proportion to the privileges they possess. They are not really trying to *advance*, to gain some good, to do some good. They do not like *effort*. The exertion of getting a lesson well or

thoroughly is too much for them, and they are satisfied to get just enough of a given lesson to show that they know something about it. If it is a Sunday-school lesson before them, they do not like to make the effort to turn to the passages of scripture referred to in illustration, or even try to remember the *places* of reference. They think it will do to have the teacher explain the lesson to them, and tell them all about it, and so that there is no use of their troubling themselves to study over the matter. The simple fact is, that such persons have acquired a habit of careless indolence. They are surrounded by a wall of laziness, and this is directly in the way of their making any great effort; and unless they leap over it, it will always be in the way of their receiving any real good, or of their being really useful in the world. No lazy man is pointed to as a great man, or as having accomplished any thing permanently good for himself, or for others. No, if gold is worth having, it is worth digging for. If truth is worth having, it is worth seeking after. If a character of usefulness is worth possessing, it is worth labouring to obtain. It will not be our's without exertion. We cannot be really useful, we cannot be really good, we

cannot be really happy, without resolute exertion.

The waters of the stagnant pool have not a pleasant look, nor can we see that they are in any way useful. To be useful, the mud wall around them must be opened, so that they can run out and water the land. So with Tom Idle. He has not a cheerful, pleasant look. He is not gaining any thing for himself. He is not of any great use to those around him. The habit of indolence is the wall around him, and to improve, he must leap over the wall.

We say to all of you, my young friends, leap over this wall while you are young. If you have a task to learn, *learn* it. If you have a duty to perform, *perform* it. If you have any thing to do, *do* it. Be stirring and active of mind in school or out of it, at home or abroad. There is much to be learned. You can learn much every day. There is much wealth of wisdom to be had: you can be getting richer in it every day if you have really leaped over the wall of indolence, which now keeps so many from either receiving or imparting actual good.

And what shall I mention next? Perhaps it should be the habit, or *wall of selfishness*.

How closely this keeps all good feeling shut

up! A selfish spirit is a mean spirit. It is a *sinful* spirit, for we are bidden to love the Lord with all the heart, and to love our neighbour as ourself. The wall of selfishness around a man keeps him confined to himself, and so keeps him in not very good company. He has no true love for those around him, or for the God above him, for the wall of selfishness prevents him from seeing any thing in others to love. A really selfish boy has no true love for his friends or for his parents, or for his Creator. He may *like* them, but his actions show that he does not really *love* them, when their wishes stand in the way of his own selfish interests.

He loves his own comfort, or his own pleasure, or his own personal gain, *far better* than the comfort, pleasure, or gain of any one else. His love is thus concentrated upon himself. Now when love thus all centres upon self, it is wasted. It is worse than wasted. It involves us in a self idolatry,—and only think of a boy *worshipping himself*! And yet perhaps there are many such boys, and many such girls, who may, properly enough, be styled *self-worshippers*. All are such who act upon the supposition that simply their own wishes constitute their rule of life. Their language

abounds in such phrases as the following: "That's *mine*." "Give *me* that." "*I* want it." "I want it *all*." "It a'n't *your's*." "You *sha'n't* have it." Now to say nothing of the bad grammar of such language, it betokens a bad spirit. Not a spirit of love, but of selfishness. Boys! girls! You must get over this wall. You must leap over it. You must have a heart of love for all around you. A spirit ready to make denials for the good of others, a willingness to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep." "God is Love," and we shall be the more like Him the more we love Him and love those around us. He shows His love to us in all the gifts we enjoy; and especially in the gift of his Son to be our Saviour, and his Holy Spirit to be our Guide and Comforter; and his word tells us that "If God so loved us, so ought we also to love one another." Selfishness, like a great wall, stands right in the way of this our love. *Over* the wall, then! Be not confined and cramped up by it. Let not those around you see that you are walled in by selfishness. No, "by the help of God," or in reliance upon his grace, *leap over that wall*, and you will have

occasion to rejoice and be thankful on account of your deliverance.

But I cannot specify all the various walls which sinful habits place around you. Is *a child in the habit of deceiving?* What a wall is around that child! It is a wall which completely keeps him shut up from acceptance with God, and if not, by the grace of God over-leaped, it will keep the child shut out for ever from the presence of the Lord. So with the *habit of swearing*. And so with every sinful practice. God, in the exercise of his free love in Christ Jesus, offers to bless and save us. But we must renounce and forsake our sins, and go to the Lord, seeking his pardoning love, and his renewing and sustaining grace. You all need these blessings, dear children. You need to be made "new creatures in Christ Jesus." Your hearts and your lives must be given to the Lord. Sin now keeps you away from the Lord. It is sin that keeps you from loving the Lord with all your heart. It is sin that blinds your eyes to a knowledge of the great love of God for you. It is sin that separates between you and your God, or that turns your feet aside from "the right way." Sin places great walls or obstructions around you, so as to

keep you "hedged in on every side." Can you leap over all these walls of sin? Who can do it? Who can leap over them? Can any one? Alas, no! no one can *alone*, or in his own strength. He is too weak. We are all too sinful and corrupt of ourselves to enable us in our own strength to keep God's holy will and commandments. We are ourselves sinful, and we are surrounded by the wall of God's condemnation. What is to aid us?

The Emperor Constantine is said on one occasion to have seen a representation of the cross in the heavens, or on the sky, over which was the inscription, "*In this conquer.*" Now it is in this, children, that we conquer. All our hope and all our strength are found in "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." In him we may be strong. He can help us over the walls of difficulty that are in our pathway. He offers us his aid. He can raise you up, and enable you to leap over the wall of condemnation against sin. If you are fully given up to love and serve Him, then you are already over this wall of condemnation. But still, temptations are all around you. Difficulties are in your way. You must not think of trying to overcome them in your own strength

alone. Jesus is your Saviour, and it is in him that you are to be strong. We want you all to be his children; to live as his; every day to seek his strength; every day to give yourself away to him, and pray him to enable you to leap over the walls that are in your way to heaven. Have courage, children, have courage! Be not disheartened by one failure, or by many failures to do right. And be not dispirited by thoughts of the many enemies or difficulties that may be around you. You have not more enemies around you than David had. Nor are your's any stronger than his were. And your Lord is as strong as David's, for you have the same Lord that he had. Do, then, as David did, *Trust in God, and press forward in the path of duty.* So will you find your enemies overcome, and at the last, you will come off "conquerors, and more than conquerors, through him who loved us, and gave himself for us, even Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith," to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever.

The Builders.

"A wise man, which built his house upon a rock." . . . "A foolish man, which built his house upon the sand."—
Matt. vii. 24, 26.

It was just like them, children, was it not? It was just like a wise man to take the precaution of digging through the sand and then laying a strong foundation of rock or stone on which to build his house! And it was just like "a foolish man" to say, Well, I shall not go to the trouble and expense of digging through this sand and laying down stone on which to build, for this sand looks to be firm enough; so I will build on it.

Yes. The two-builders who are thus spoken of by our Lord as building their houses—the one on the rock and the other on the sand—are well characterized as being the one "a wise man," and the other "a foolish man."

And their houses had not been built but a little while, before the wisdom of the one

builder, and the folly of the other were clearly seen. "The rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon" the two houses. The one that had a good, strong, rocky foundation, withstood the power of the storm without receiving harm; but of the house that was built on the sand, we are told that its foundation was soon wasted away, and itself blown over. Thus the "wise man" felt paid for his prudent carefulness in building, and the "foolish man" was punished for his careless haste.

Now those two builders have many representatives in the world. We find them among the young, and we find them among the old. Among both young and old are some who engage thoughtlessly, or without proper care as to the foundation, in almost every work they undertake. And these are usually soon punished by having their work prove to be of but little or no real worth, while others, acting upon the principle of doing *well* whatever they do at all, enjoy the rewards of their careful labour.

It is said that "there are two ways of doing every thing that can be done," viz. a *right* way and a *wrong* way. Now it makes considerable difference which of these ways we choose. "The

wrong way" may be the easiest one, but "the right way" is sure to be the best one. Those who work in the wrong way are foolish builders. Those who work in the right way are wise builders. The school boys or girls who spend that time in idleness or in play which they ought to spend in study, and who then, to make out a recitation, rely upon being told or on being able to peep into the book, are *foolish* builders—very foolish builders. They are engaged in erecting an intellectual building, and if they put the parts of it so carelessly or loosely together, the building will be of no use to them in days to come. The only sure foundation for an intellectual building is *study*, careful study. If you rely or build on any thing else you are a foolish builder, and sooner or later you will find out your folly.

When I see a boy in his studies careful to understand every thing he is about; one who gives his time and his attention closely to his lessons until he has thoroughly learned them, I know that such a boy is a wise builder. His learning may not seem to increase as fast as that of some others who, like swallows on the pond, skim along over the surface with an occasional dip, but then the wise builder boy will have his

knowledge to rely upon and sustain him, when others will have none of any real value. Whatever is useful, and at the same time well-learned, is a *sure* gain. If carefully stored away in the memory, it will be ready for use when the time of need arrives. In what you have to learn, then, children, build on the good foundation of careful study. No matter if it does take longer, and you have to work a little harder. Yet in your building of knowledge, build *well*; build on a good foundation and carefully, and then your building will last. It will stand the test of examination and severe trial, and will remain not only a credit to your faithfulness, but a reward of it.

In other respects, as well as in your relations as scholars, you are all building, in these your earlier days, either for enjoyment or for misery in your coming, later days of life. Now if you live long enough, you will be men and women *in age*, without any effort of your own. But do you want to be men and women *in years* only? Do you not want to be such in strength of mind, and in worth of character, and in the extent of influence? If so, you must now be building for these results. You must aim at them, and must work for them. And what

is the best way? Why it is to build on a good, strong foundation.

And do you ask what is the good strong foundation for true success? In one word I answer—INTEGRITY! Integrity of purpose and integrity of action will insure true success. Nothing else will. Let me illustrate this. About ten years ago two boys left their country homes to engage in city life and business. They had been through the studies of the primary schools, and the academy of their native town. And in the city they engaged, about the same time, as clerks in different stores. They were both of them desirous of “getting ahead” in the world; or, in other words, of becoming prosperous and rich. One of them, however, was of a restless disposition, and somewhat careless in his habits as to application and work. He was over anxious to be rich. He was so very desirous of having his building speedily erected, that he was not very careful as to the foundation on which he built.

After continuing as clerk but a very few years, (some four or five,) he found an opportunity of going into business for himself. He was anxious to have his own name on a sign, and to feel that he was a master instead of a

clerk. But he had not fully "counted the cost" of it, nor considered all the consequences of it. He was not careful as to the man with whom he went into partnership. He invested the few hundreds of dollars at his disposal in business, and commenced operations with his new partner. Sales, however, were not so many or so large as he had anticipated, nor was his character or that of his partner sufficiently established to call out the help of those who otherwise would have aided them. Money was not made, but rather lost. Then various speculations were engaged in, in hopes of rapid gain. These speculations failed, and soon rash ambition led to an engagement in fraudulent means for gain. These for a time succeeded, and riches began to come in. But it was a vain scheme—a hopeless struggle. An exposure soon took place, and failure and miserable disgrace followed it. A year ago the young man was without money, without business, without friends, without respect. He has begun again, indeed, and begun on a better foundation. If faithful now, he will in a measure succeed, but not without feeling, all through his life, the loss of time and means and character worse than thrown away.

And where is the youth who commenced city business life at the same time with him! His history is soon told, and is an honourable one. He had determined to build on the foundation of *a good character*. So he was careful to lay this foundation deep, and make it strong. He worked steadily and faithfully as a clerk for some eight years, advancing year by year in position and influence. Now he is a junior partner in a house well known and respected, and his prospects, as to honest wealth and influence, are of the very best character. His position as a man of business is built on the sure foundation of Integrity. The building stands strong and firm, and has already withstood the power of some pretty severe storms of adversity.

Can you learn nothing from this, dear children? Does it illustrate nothing? Nay, does it not illustrate the teaching of our text, viz., that he is "a wise man" who builds on the rock; while he is "a foolish man," who builds on the sand! In school, building-up for knowledge, or in business, building-up for wealth and gain, the truth is the same. There is a wise course and there is a foolish course. The course of wisdom is to pay careful attention to the foundation on

which you build, and the course of folly is to regard not the foundation, but to hurry up an attractive building on any ground that will sustain it just while you build! Which of these is to be preferred? Which of them shows the principle that *you* are resolved to act upon?

But, my dear children, are you all building for eternity? I mean by this, are you trying so to live here on earth as that hereafter you shall have an interest in that house of which we read in the scriptures, and which is described as being "*a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?*" Oh, that must be a glorious house! And it is gracious truth that if we build aright here, then the house or home above will be ours for ever,—ours with all its glories, ours to dwell in with our beloved Lord, and with angels and "saints made perfect in heaven."

Now are you each trying to build up a good Christian character? This is the work for you. It is a noble work! It is the best work you can be engaged upon. You can be at it at all times, too. It will not interfere with your regular employments. Nay, it is to be a part of whatever you do. In all the duties of life, and in all the pleasures of life you should be building

up a solid Christian character. It is worth every thing to you, for it will gain for you the respect and love of friends and the approbation of God! Can you tell me what is the reason that the old patriarch Jacob loved Joseph more than any of Joseph's brethren? Why did not Jacob love the rest of his sons as much as he loved Joseph? I have often thought that he loved Joseph most, just *because he couldn't help it*. And do you ask *why* he could not help it? The answer is, because Joseph was such a *lovable* character. There was so much more in Joseph to love than in the others, that Jacob could not help loving him more than he loved the rest of them. And this is perfectly natural. If you have several friends, which one will you love most? Certainly the one that seems to you to have the most in him to love. And now if you show such a consistent, goodly, loving character as Joseph showed, then you will be honoured and loved wherever you go. Good people cannot help loving you, because you will display those characteristics which constitute a real magnet with the tendency to draw toward it every thing of its kind within the circle of its influence.

And, children, if you want to build up a good

Christian character, you must be very careful about laying the right foundation. There is no use in your building a house on the sand. It cannot last long. When the storms beat upon it, away will go the sandy basis and over will go the building. Build on the solid rock. Then you will have some security against the power of the storm, and the world will see that you have acted like "a wise man."

And what is the rock or sure foundation on which you must build your hopes for eternity, or on which you must erect your building of a good Christian character? Surely you all know. How often have you been pointed to that sure foundation! The word of God is given to reveal it to us. The great object of the Sunday-school and of the church of Christ is to tell you about the "*Rock, Christ Jesus*," and urge you to build on him. We are plainly told, by the Holy Spirit, that "*other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*"* If, then, dear children, you would build aright, you must build on Christ Jesus. His gracious, His atoning merits constitute the rock of ages on which believers in Him, both

* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

young and old, may build their hopes of happiness in Heaven. Rest in His love. Build on His merits, and build according to His word. Thus do you become Christian builders.

Each one has a Christian character to build up. It must be built on the "sure foundation," and it must be built according to the holy will and commandments of our blessed Lord.

It is a holy work. All heaven is interested in it,—all earth should be. Come ye. Come and be young Christian builders! Build, by the acts of your daily life, a character which shall be known of all as belonging to Christ. Build according to the rules of His holy word. Build in the strength of His Holy Spirit. Build with thoughts of His constant presence. Build for eternity and heaven! And can you do nothing, young Christian builders, toward extending the great building or Church of Christ on earth? Can you contribute nothing toward it? The building is going on. Every child or person converted to Christ is a new stone in the walls of the building, or a pillar to aid in its support. Every good book you help to distribute, every Sunday-school you help to establish, every thing you give toward sending the Bible abroad among those who have it not,

every Christian word and deed of yours may be of some influence in the good work of building up the Redeemer's kingdom. Your consistent Christian life would be of great service in this holy work. Your prayers also will do much. Without these, indeed, you can do nothing in the way of good building, either for yourselves or for others.

Build then, we say, for heaven, as "a wise man" builds his house, namely, on the rock! Build in faith or trust in Jesus. Build in hope. Build in love. Build in prayer. Build for Christ, and so truly for yourself, in what you think, in what you say, in what you do, in what you suffer, in what you hate, in what you love. Never be ashamed to let it be known that you are trying to build up a character that in its enjoyments will last for ever. In all that you do, only be sure that you are on the right foundation; then *build away*. As you learn something more of "the knowledge of God as the truth is in Jesus," you are building up for heaven. When you engage cheerfully in a deed of kindness—trying to do good to those around you—you are building on the Rock; so build on. In gaining more power over temptation, in acquiring more and more love for

heavenly things, and showing a more ready and cheerful obedience to heavenly teachings, you are building as God would have you build. You are perfecting your building of a good character, that will last for ever. In the strength of God, then, or in reliance upon His grace, which you must daily seek, and in accordance with the rules of His word, and on the sure rock that He reveals for you, ye young, wise builders, build on! God will bless your work. He will bless you in it. He will abundantly reward you for it. After you have done building on earth, he will give you an everlasting dwelling-place in the glorious temple above.

Hearers.

Take heed therefore how ye hear.—Luke viii. 18.

CHILDREN, did you ever see a squirrel running up the side of his cage-wheel? No doubt the little fellow thought he was getting ahead quite fast; but how far away do you suppose he would go in an hour of such wheel-running? “Not very far,” you are ready to say. He may run fast and long, and yet make no progress.

Well, it is just so with a great many children. They talk fast, but say nothing. They work busily, and yet *do* nothing—nothing, I mean, that is really useful to themselves or others. They seem to be always busy, and yet they gain but little or no knowledge, and impart none to any one else. I do not refer now to very young children, who cannot be expected to exercise much thought as to what they are about; but I mean children old enough to “take heed” as to the duties and the privileges which belong to them.

A person has no right to be walking carelessly along on the brink of a precipice, or on a rail-road track. No, we must "*take heed*" where we walk; and take heed *how* we walk. And so it is in all things that we do. We must not do any thing carelessly or thoughtlessly, for we are bound to pay attention to what we are at, to see that it is done aright. We must not even *hear* carelessly, for the word of God tells us in our text to "*Take heed how we hear.*"

If people would only take heed how they hear, how much suffering we should all be spared. *There is the tale-bearer—he doesn't take heed how he hears.* He is so anxious to tell every thing that he hears, that he does not stop to think whether or not it is right for him to tell it. He may hear things which he ought not to repeat. Every one hears such things. But the tale-bearer is like a leaky pitcher,—he can hold nothing for any length of time. Many things that he hears he *ought to hear as though he heard them not.* But he is so anxious to hear every thing that is talked about, that he gathers in stories, whether true or false, as a pedler gathers up his trinkets, and then he goes about retailing out his stories to any-

body who will buy, by stopping long enough to listen.

Nor does the tale-bearer take so much heed how he hears, as to confine himself to the truth in what he tells. Did you ever help to make a snow-hill? A boy makes a small ball of snow within his hands, and then it is rolled over and over in the snow that lies on the ground. One boy gives it a turn over, and then another rolls it over, and then another, and so on. At each turn it increases in size, until it becomes too large and heavy to be moved by them altogether. Something like this is the work of tale-bearers. One of them hears a little matter which perhaps is true. He rolls it over, however, in his own mind and words before he gives it to any one else. The next one rolls it over again and increases its size. And so it passes on, as turned over by one after another, until the tale gets so large and heavy by reason of errors that have clung to it, that it is about impossible to recognise any truth as belonging to it. Take heed, therefore, children, how ye hear stories and tales about other people. First, take heed as to whether such things are to be told again; and if not, bury them in forgetfulness. And if you should tell them, tell them

as you *hear* them, without any embellishments or additions of your own.

If we want to learn any thing, children, it will not answer to walk through life with our ears closed, any more than to have our eyes shut. And yet there are times when it is important to have the eyes closed. At night, for rest, and in the day-time, when particles of dust or any thing injurious to the eye is flying about us. So there are times when we want the ears closed. They need rest; and if we are all the time hearing, and at no time thinking, we shall not be much profited. And then we are sometimes so situated as that things are flying around which are very injurious to us, and which will get in at our ears unless we are very careful.

Profane and other bad words, how often are they heard! At times they seem to fly around our ears as though the air were full of them. Now what is to be done under such circumstances? What is a child to do when bad words are used by those around him? What can he do? May he stand still and listen? Oh no; that would be receiving a sure poison in at the ears which would affect the heart, and ere long break out at the mouth—a sad, sad disease of sin! There is one thing a

child under such circumstances can, generally, do. He can close his ears *and run*. If he *must* stay where profane swearing or low vulgar words are used—if some duty really requires him to stay for a time in such a place—then he must not be content to be silent. He must open his mouth and protest against the use of such language. This the young child can do. This every child and every man *ought* to do, for we are all solemnly accountable, not only for what we do and what we say, but also for the manner in which we *hear what is said*.

The command of God to us all, in our text, is, “*Take heed therefore how ye hear!*” and it evidently implies that we are to take heed, or be careful to get out of the way of hearing what is bad; or if we cannot do this, at least to show by our manner, if not by our words, that we rebuke and protest against the hearing of it.

Oh, how many youth are ruined by not taking heed how they hear what is evil! A boy will stroll out in the evening when he ought to be at home, and will soon be found at the engine-house or the tavern, or at the corner of the street, listening to the profane language and vulgar stories of those who are older in sin than himself. Oh, if we could only be near such a

had the first time he sits down with the crowd of evil talkers, we should whisper in his ear, "*Take heed how you hear.*" Nay, we should hardly be content to whisper it—we should want to thunder it into his ears, that, if possible, it might start him from his place, so that in very fear he should turn his feet homeward. But there he sits; and there, evening after evening, he may be found. And there heedlessly he takes in, through his ears, the poison which perhaps is to disturb his peace for ever. Oh boys, "Take heed how ye hear" that which is evil! "*Sit not in the way of the scornful.*" "*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*" "*Shun profane and vain babblers.*" To all vulgar, wicked story-tellers be "*like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*"

But again:—You must take heed how you hear that which is good.

The best words you can hear are the words of God. The best instruction you can possibly have is that contained in the Old and New Testaments. Now it is a gracious privilege that you enjoy in having the words of the Lord for your instruction. There are many children who know nothing of the Saviour whom you are

taught to love, who know nothing of the happy home in heaven that you are taught to live for. How sad is their lot! Do you not pity them? Pity them you should. Not only so, but you should pray for them also. Try by your prayers and your pennies to send to them the blessed gospel, which tells of the love of Jesus in coming upon the earth to suffer and die for us, and who is now living above to intercede for and "save unto the uttermost all who will come unto God by him."

But more than this, as you have the happy privilege of hearing of the Saviour and of hearing his own words, you must take heed how you hear.

You must hear with reverence. It will not do to trifle when the Lord speaks to you, for he speaks to tell you good things and gracious things which are "able to make you wise unto salvation." Now if you want to be wise, if you want to be saved and made happy for ever, you must take heed how you hear the words which the Lord speaks to you.

A great many years ago there lived a good little boy who one night heard a voice calling him by his name. He listened, and was sure that some one called him. He thought it must

be the good old man with whom he lived; so he he got up and went to the bed-side of the good old man and asked if he called him! He was told No, and bidden to lie down again. So he went back to his own bed. But in a little while he heard the voice again calling him. He got up the second time and went and said, "Here am I, for thou didst call me." And he was answered, "I called not, my son; lie down again." And so it was the third time, and then the little boy's good old friend told him it must be the Lord that called to him. So the fourth time he heard the voice calling to him, he replied, "SPEAK, FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH." That is, Speak, Lord, for I am ready to hear what thou wouldst have me hear, and to do what thou wouldst have me do. It was even the Lord God who called to him, and the Lord found him so attentive and reverential a listener, that he told him some things of great importance. Oh what a night was that for that little boy! The Lord of heaven talked to him as he lay there on his little bed, not afraid, but simply listening to know what the Lord would have him know.

When little Samuel woke,

And heard his Maker's voice,

At every word he spoke,
How much did he rejoice!
Oh blessed, happy, child to find
The God of heaven so near and kind!"

And is there any one of you who would like to be situated as little Samuel was when the Lord spoke directly to him? Is there any one here who can truly say—

If God would speak to me,
And say he was my friend,
How happy should I be!
Oh how would I attend!
The smallest sin I then should fear,
If God Almighty were so near.

If there is any one such here, we bid him remember the next words of the little hymn, and say—

And does God never speak?
Oh yes! for in his word
He bids me come and seek
The God whom Samuel heard:
In almost every page I see,
The God of Samuel calls to me.

Thus, in his blessed word does God speak to each one of you, dear children. And he says, My son or my daughter, give me thine heart. He wants you to love Him. He wants you to trust in Him. He wants you to pray to Him.

He wants you in all things to obey Him. Oh then take heed how you hear God's holy word, when it is read to you, or taught to you, or preached in your hearing! Yes! take heed how you hear it. It is God's word. It is God speaking to you in his word. Hear it not carelessly or heedlessly, but hear it with reverence, hear it as from heaven—from whence, indeed, it comes.

Again:—*Hear the word of God with the purpose of doing what it requires of you.* We sometimes see a child pay so little attention to what is told him, that he very soon forgets all about it. How wrong this is! The Scriptures frequently sound out the singular expression, “*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” That is, he that hath the opportunity of hearing the truths of the Divine word, let him be all ear, or all attention to them! Let him improve his privileges while they are his. And must he *hear* simply? Is *hearing* going to save any one of itself! Not so, for our blessed Lord tells us that if any one hears his sayings, and doeth them not, he is like a foolish man building his house on the sand, to be blown down by the first storm that beats upon it. Now there are always two kinds of hearers.

There are doing-hearers, and there are *hearers* that hear and do nothing. We want the former kind. Those, only, will be really benefited by what they hear.

If you are about to cross a rail-road track, and you read the sign stretched across the road, "Look out for the engine when the bell rings," and just then you hear the bell sounding its warning—will you not take heed how you hear? Will you be as careless as though you saw nothing and heard nothing to remind you of danger? Ah! if in matters of the body you so hear as to do what is required for safety, hear in like manner warnings and truths which have reference to the care of your soul! When you hear warnings against sin, look out! Examine yourselves to see whether or not you may not be on the track of some sinful practice. When you hear that "God is angry with the wicked every day," examine yourselves to see whether or not you are trying, in the strength of God, to overcome all wickedness. When you hear of the love of God in sending his Son into the world to save sinners and in offering to bless and save you—"take heed how you hear." See to it that you are endeavouring to become partakers of the love of God in Christ

Jesus. Let not your ears, dear children, be closed against the truth, whether that truth comes to you in messages of warning about the danger you are in, or in messages of grace, offering you pardon and peace for this world and for that which is to come.

Keep your ears open to hear the truth; and be very careful *how* you hear it. The Lord, our heavenly Father, says to each one of you, "*My son, give me thine heart!*" Do you hear the words? "*My son, give me thine heart!*" Ah! hear then not in vain. Hear them not carelessly. They are the words of God, and they are addressed to *you*! You may not live to hear them again. But you hear them now, and have, I suppose, often heard them before. Slight them not. You have hearts, or affections that God calls for. Let him have them. Though they are young, yet give them to him now, for he calls for them now, and young hearts he delights to have given to him. If truly given to him, he will accept them. He will cleanse or renew them by his Holy Spirit. He will truly bless them for time, and for eternity. Oh then, children, take heed *how* ye hear the calls of the Lord. He calls on you to repent truly of your sins past. He calls

on you to put your trust in the blessed Saviour and love and serve him. He calls upon you to be his children and servants here and for ever. But if you will not take heed how ye hear these calls of love, nor seek to profit by them, then the time may come when the Lord may speak to you in the solemn words recorded by the Spirit in the Book of Proverbs, saying, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you."*

* Prov. i. 24-27.

Truth Merchants; or, Buying and Selling.

PART I.

“*Buy the truth, and sell it not.*”—Prov. xxiii. 23.

CHILDREN, we are in want of *merchants*. We want *young* merchants. We want *you*. We have a profitable business to tell you about, and we want to get you—*all* of you—to engage in it.

Many that are desirous of going to work are often greatly troubled to find good and profitable employment. They want to learn a business that is worth engaging in, one that will both give them good occupation and pay them for their labour. . But sometimes they make inquiries at the busy stores and shops day after day without finding “an opening.” All the places seem to be filled up. This is a sad state of things indeed—to be young, and strong, and desirous of working, and yet not be able to find any business to engage in!

But the business I am now to tell you about,

is open for you all. Nor will it interfere with your present duties. If you attend school, you can continue to do so, and yet engage in the business I am to set before you. If you are already learning a trade, attention to *this* one will help you greatly in the one you are at.

As I said before, we want merchants, for it is a mercantile trade to which you are invited. There is an article for you to purchase. It is very important that you should have it. Indeed, you cannot get along well without it. You must *purchase* it. You must keep purchasing more and more of it. You must give for it whatever price is demanded. It will be of great value to you to lay in a large stock of it. The more the better. If labour and self-denials are required in order to procure this article, you must not hesitate. It is to be your business to purchase it, no matter what it costs.

Are you ready to engage in this business? Are you ready to become purchasers of the important thing to which I refer? Let me tell you then what the thing is you are to purchase. I shall tell you in the words of the wise King Solómon. His language to us all is, "BUY THE TRUTH!" This, then, children, is what you are to buy. *Buy the Truth.* It is worth more

than any thing else; so that you must get it, whether it is easy or hard to obtain.

There are different kinds of truths, and you are especially to be engaged in procuring those kinds that are of the most importance for you. The truths of geography—the truths of history—the truths of arithmetic—the truths of language—these are all worth buying, and they are all such as you ought to buy, and *must* buy if you would have your store-house well furnished. These truths are of constant use to you. You will find an advantage every day in possessing them.

It is the physician's knowledge of certain truths in the practice of medicine that enables him oftentimes to arrest disease, and be the means of restoring a sick person to health. It is the sailor's knowledge of the truths of navigation that enables him, by day and by night, to steer his vessel across the trackless deep, so guiding it as to reach the "haven where he would be." Now if any of you are to be physicians, you must, in due time, have knowledge of the truths or laws of medicine. And if any of you are to be sailors, you will have to obtain knowledge of the truths or laws of navigation. These truths are for sale.

And if you want them, or are ever to have use for them, you must *buy* them. But, children, you cannot have all truths. There are many truths of law, and many truths of chemistry, and many truths of astronomy, that probably you will never obtain. But it is not necessary for you to have all these. Your business is to get such truths as are of greatest importance to you.

Now there is one kind of truth that is of the utmost importance. It is of vital consequence that you should have as much of it as you can obtain. It will be of advantage to you every day. It is of so great value that it is styled "*THE Truth!*" to distinguish it from other truths and show its superior worth. It is "*knowledge of God, as the truth is in Jesus.*" It is knowledge of God's love for us, knowledge of what God requires us to renounce, what to believe, and what to do, in order that we may live as he would have us live. It is knowledge of ourselves as sinners; knowledge of the pardoning mercy of God in Christ, and knowledge of the renewing and sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost. All these truths may be had by us. They have respect to our welfare now, and to our welfare for ever. Without knowing something of them you will not know how to live. And without

having something of the grace of which they tell, you will not be prepared to die. These truths are all contained in God's own book, the Bible; and when we speak of *the Truth* for your guidance, we mean the teachings contained in the revealed truth, or written word of God.

And, dear children, this truth is *all-important* for you. It can make you wise, for it has wisdom for sale, which, truly obtained by you, will make you wise unto salvation. It can make you rich, for it will exhibit the "goodly pearl," "the pearl of great price," to obtain which the good merchantman gave up every thing else; and then it will show you how to procure it, and thus make you inestimably rich. This truth will show you also how you may "shine as stars in the firmament of God for ever." It will show you a ladder reaching from earth up to heaven and teach you how you may be carried up thereon, and made inheritors of all the indescribable glories of the celestial kingdom.

Now is not this truth worth having? Is it not worth *buying*? It is this truth of God for our guidance and salvation that the wise Solomon refers to, when, as in our text, he says, "*Buy the truth.*"

Begin then in this traffic, young merchant children! Be all of you engaged in buying the truth. Yea, make this the very business of your lives. Do you say that you have nothing to buy it with? or, that you do not know what you must give for it? We will dwell upon this point a little while, and see if we cannot make it plain to you. Suppose a boy is just sitting down to get a lesson in his grammar. Now what does he have to give for it? Twenty-five cents! But we do not mean what does his book cost, but what is the first thing he has to give, in order to obtain possession of the truths contained in his lesson?

ATTENTION!

Yes, he must give *attention*, or he can never obtain the lesson. When we obtain an article by giving something for it, we buy it—do we not? Then the boy who gives attention for his lesson, buys the truth or truths contained in the lesson—does he not? Yes! And what does he pay for it? *He pays attention*. Now, children, whatever truth you would have, you must be willing to *buy*; and the first thing you have to pay for it is *attention*. You cannot honestly get any truth without purchasing it. If you are working out a sum, the truth you

want to get is the answer. Now there are several ways of getting it. You may look in the book and get it, but that is *stealing* it. You may ask the boy on your right for it, but that is *begging* it. You may turn to the boy on your left hand and say, "If you will show me this time, I will show you the next time," and so you may get the answer, but that would be *borrowing* it. Now the only fair, honest course for you to obtain the answer, is to *buy it*, or at least to make *every effort to buy it*, before attempting to get it in any other way. If it is worth having, it is certainly worth your earnest attention: therefore offer that for it, and see if that will purchase it. If you are in Sunday-school, and your teacher, superintendent, pastor, or any one else is addressing you, he expects you to give him at least *something* for his address. What ought you to give him? Your *attention*, surely. Without giving this, you cannot procure the truths he has to impart.

It is so when any one is endeavouring to teach you. It is so with any lesson you would learn. It is so with any book you read. If you want to get truth, you must *buy it*, by paying at least *attention* for it. You can get useless and injurious things without paying much—but not

good things. Your garden will produce weeds without any culture. But it will not show beautiful flowers and pleasant plants without care. You can fall into the ditch without looking which way you are going, but you can walk in a "strait and narrow path" without having your eyes open and paying attention. You can follow in the sinful ways of the world, and be just as heedless as you may choose to be. But if you would "learn of God, and do his will," you must "give heed" to your steps. You must look which way you are going. You must keep your eyes open on his truth. You must pay attention to his requirements.

You can buy some truth or other every day, by paying attention for it. It is for sale almost everywhere; but this is one of the terms of purchase, you must pay attention. You see then, children, that you not only have truths to procure, but that you really have something to give for it. In other words, you must *buy* it. If you have a lesson to learn, it will not do to go to sleep over the book. Nor will it answer to be looking around at other things. Nor will it suffice to be looking at the book, and yet *thinking* of something else. The book will not *give* you the lesson without some payment.

The lesson will not give you itself. It will not jump up into your head and become your property as soon as you open the book or glance at it. No, you must *buy the truth*, and the very least you can pay for it, is "attention."

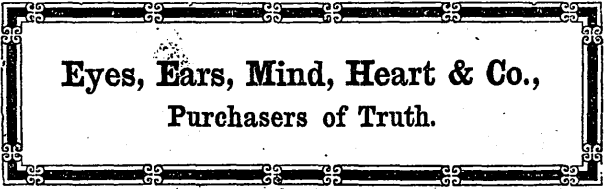
Sometimes you will have to pay more attention than at other times. It depends either upon the value of the truth or the difficulty of obtaining it. Gold ore lies sometimes quite deep under the ground, so that the miner has to dig down a great distance to obtain it. Precious gems and jewels are found sometimes at the bottom of deep waters, and the diver has to go down after them. Now the *truth* does not always lie on the *surface*. It may not always be seen at a glance, or picked up in a minute. You may have to dig for it, or you may have to dive for it. The ground of your own ignorance or of your prejudices may be above the truth you need: so that you must dig down below this ground to get at the truth. The waters of error may be flowing over the gems of truth that you should have. If so, you must dive down below these waters, or you must be able to turn them aside in order to get possession of the required truth.

And thus you may see, children, that some-

what besides *mere attention* is often required, with which to *buy the truth*. What else do you think? IT IS LABOUR.

If you hire a man to saw wood for you, you expect him to give his attention and his labour to the work. To express it in one sentence, he must give his *laborious attention*.

If you are young truth-merchants, you must remember that you are to give for the truth whatever is demanded. You must give labour for it; in other words, *you must work for it*. The eyes must work. The ears must work. The mind must work. The heart must work. The feet must work. The hands must work. All these must contribute something towards the purchase of truth. All are interested in it. All are to be profited by it. Therefore all must work. It is a sort of joint-stock company, which might have as the title of the firm and designation of business—



Eyes, Ears, Mind, Heart & Co.,
Purchasers of Truth.

When there is truth to be had from books, "Eyes" must pay attention; and when truth is to be had from one who is speaking to you or reading to you, "Ears" must be "on hand," and attentively engaged. "Mind" is the accounting and recording clerk of the establishment. He must be always at work. He has something to do with every transaction. He has to record each purchase. He has to note each event of the business and charge it either to profit or loss. And "Heart" must be given to work. He must inspire the rest of the firm with love for their work and zeal in it. He must warn against wrong steps, and warmly encourage every good effort for the obtaining or imparting of truth.

And "Feet" must run after truth; and must also run to take it to those in need. And "Hands" must lay hold, ready to do whatever may be required. Thus all have something to do. Each member of the firm has something to give toward the purchase of truth. Now each one of you is such a firm. You have various faculties, all of which are to be employed in buying truth, or in getting wisdom.

And oh, if all the members of each one of these firms before me, were but actively en-

gaged in the great work of buying "*the truth as it is in Jesus*," what a profitable and what a happy business you would find it! As pupils in a Sunday-school, you are all truth merchants, but we want you more actively to engage in the work.

We want you to devote yourselves more than ever to the procuring of that truth which maketh "wise unto salvation." We want you to have eyes and ears, mind and heart, feet and hands, all engaged in this delightful work. If the Sunday-school room is one of your places of business, then let your feet bring you there in good time. Let your hands handle properly the books you are to use. Let your eyes be upon your books and your instructors. Let your ears give heed to the words of instruction. Let your mind be fully given to the work. And let your heart treasure up the truth you receive, and pray for God's blessing to rest upon it. Be thus engaged, wherever you are. At home or abroad, in the school-room or in the sanctuary of the Lord, be diligent in the search for truth, and especially in the search for such truth as will show you the way to heaven, and the way of fitness for the enjoyment of heaven. So will

you be successful truth-merchants, getting somewhat richer and richer every day.

But what are you to do with the truth, as you get it? Hoard it up? That would be miserly. Shall you sell it? Solomon says, in our text, you know, "Buy the truth, and *sell it not.*" Now upon this latter part, or what you are to do with the truth, we may talk to you at another time.

For the present, think of what you have heard as the business for you to engage in. Be active in this business. Consider yourselves truth-merchants. Let each day find you adding something good to your store.

Especially seek to know more of the Lord Jesus Christ—to love him more, to serve him better. So may you be his children, both for this world and the world to which we are all fast hastening. Here in this life is the season for business in the way of gaining wisdom and becoming prepared for the realities of eternity. Therefore now, while there is opportunity, "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.*"

Truth Merchants; or, Buying and Selling.

PART II.

"Buy the truth, and sell it not."—Prov. xxiii. 23.

WE have told you, dear children, that we wanted you all to become active truth merchants. We have told you to be particular to lay in such truths as would be of most value to you, and, especially, to gain as much as you can of "the truth as it is in Jesus." We have told you that rightly to obtain the truth you must *buy* it. And now do you remember what you are to buy it with, or what you must give for it?

"Attention" and "labour." Yes, these are coins with which you may purchase much truth. They constitute money that is current everywhere. When Sir Isaac Newton saw an apple fall from the tree to the ground, he only saw what hundreds and thousands of persons before his day had seen. But then he paid more

“attention” to what he now saw than others had done. He put his mind to work upon it, and his mind, by that work, arrived at a truth respecting the laws of gravitation, which has been of great value to the world. His greatness as the discoverer of this truth was bought with attention and labour.

Some children hear such language as that which tells them to “*love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul and mind,*” and yet hear it as though they heard it not. They seem to receive the instruction in at one ear, and let it pass directly out at the other—whereas when it enters the head, it ought to be carried directly down to the heart; and the blessing of the Lord should be sought upon it, that it may be sanctified to the regulation of the whole life. Occasionally you will find a child who is thus attentive. I once knew a dear little girl in Sunday-school who always paid attention to what was taught her. Thus she bought much truth. Every week she added something more to her stock of truth. But she did more than this. She knew that it was not enough simply to have the truth stored up in her memory. She knew that she ought to be making good use of it. So she did what all ought to do. She prayed

to God to bless the truth to her good—to enable her to live in accordance with the good teachings or truths she learned. In this way the truth she bought was of very great use to her; and now she is actively and faithfully using it in the way of instructing and guiding others into heavenly wisdom, whose *“ways are ways of pleasantness, and all of whose paths are peace.”*

But while you are commanded to “buy the truth,” you are forbidden to sell it. “Sell it not” is the injunction.

Now you would think it a strange sort of business simply to buy goods and store them away without ever selling any of them. A man could not get rich in such a business as that. In mercantile life a man must sell as well as buy, if he would “get gain.” But the truth you buy for the good it does you, and the good it enables you to do for others: therefore, you want to buy as much of it as you can. And you want to *use* it, but not sell it. You will have offers, sometimes, for the truth. Companions may want you to give up the truth, or depart from the truth. But it is your business to hold fast the truth and abide by it.

The deceiver sells the truth.

And what does he get for it? He gets the consciousness of having done wrong. He gets involved in all the consequences of a degrading habit of mind. He injures others. He sadly injures himself, and does good to no one, by deceiving. If you part with a character for truthfulness, what are you good for? Who will trust you? Who can place any confidence in you? People will say of you, "He has sold the truth—he cannot be relied upon." Now it is a very easy matter to part with the truth. You have only to yield to temptation, and commence trying to deceive, and your character for truth goes quickly. And when this goes, you have very little left that is good for much.

Washington loved the truth. He always adhered to the truth—would never sell it; and Washington now lives, and will ever live in grateful remembrance "in the hearts of his countrymen."

But Arnold, who was in the army under Washington, *sold the truth*. He became a traitor to the truth and to his country, and now his name is only thought of or mentioned with sorrow and shame. Remember, children, "a good name is rather to be desired than great riches." And if you sell the truth, no

matter what you get for it, you cannot have "a good name" in the sight of God. Step by step children sometimes get into this miserable and awful habit of deceiving. They will try to deceive their parents. They will try to deceive their teachers. They will do something they ought not to do, or neglect a duty they ought to perform, and then tell a falsehood to cover over their crime. Oh how sinful this is! It is sinning—and then sinning again in the endeavour to hide the previous sin. Children, have nothing to do with deceit! Be above it. Keep away from it as far as possible. Sell not the truth for any consideration.

The truth is not to be trifled with. *To trifle with the truth is to sell it.* Sometimes a child who would shrink at telling a direct falsehood, will yet endeavour in a roundabout way to deceive. He does not like to speak the truth right out, and so changes the character of it a little—"just a little," as he supposes—for the purpose of making it less condemning to himself. Such a child tries to get out what is sometimes called "a white lie," thinking this less sinful or less objectionable than a *black* one.

Now, children, we do not want your minds

confused with thoughts of different-coloured falsehoods. We do not believe in blue and red and green and white lies. We believe they are all black. Some may be more *glaring* than others, but they are all black. That is, *they are all sinful*. When you attempt any of them, you *sell the truth*, for the truth will not bear being trifled with.

I remember once reading of a nobleman who wanted a coachman—so he advertised for one—and the next morning three men presented themselves as candidates for the place. The nobleman had a question to ask them, so he turned to one of them and asked, “Well, sir, how near can you drive to a precipice without going over it?” The man replied, “Within a foot of it, sir.” The same question was then put to the next one, “How near to a precipice can *you* drive without going over?” “Within *an inch*, sir,” was the man’s reply. The nobleman then turned to the third man and asked him the same question. The man considered a moment and then replied, “I don’t know how near to a precipice I *could* drive in case of emergency, but I should always keep as far away from it as possible.”

“You are just the man I want as my coach-

man," said the nobleman, and gave him the place at once.

Now remember, children, that truth is the road for you, and error is the precipice. You are not to see how near you can drive to the precipice without going over it, but if wise, you will "always keep as far away from it as possible."

But there are others who sell the truth besides those we have called *deceivers* and *triflers*.

The indolent sell the truth. Some of them sell it for sleep, and for sleep that they do not need. They are waked up perhaps early in the morning, and the question is, "Shall I get up and study my lesson, or shall I sell this opportunity of getting it for 'a little more sleep,' and so let the lesson go?" This business question is not long considered, but is generally very soon decided in favour of "a little more folding of the hands to sleep." And the indolent through the day are not more than half awake as to the securing or retaining of truth. If they learn any thing good, they do not lock it up in the memory, or apply it in the life, but soon lose it by forgetfulness.

When they go home from Sunday-school or

from the church, they are hardly able to say what was the subject taught them. And after reading a good book, they can remember but little more than the anecdotes or stories it contained. Now this is selling the truth or parting with it, through mere carelessness or indolence. It is not just like parting with a truthful character through practice of deceit, but still it is wrong. It is *wasteful*, and to be wasteful is sinful. And after all, children, one great object in our trying to buy up all the truth we can, or in our gaining all the useful knowledge we can, is in *order that we may be of use in the world*—that we may be doing good to ourselves and others.

Now how can you pour water out of a pitcher when there is no water in it? You must go to the spring, or the well, or the hydrant, and fill up the pitcher first: then you will have water to give to the thirsty. So, unless you are filling up your minds with good truths, you will have nothing to do good with. Your little brother or sister perhaps is thirsty, and longs for a drink of some simple knowledge that you ought to have. They apply to you, and you take up the pitcher and find it empty. That is, you examine your mind, and find that you have not got the

truth asked for. You either failed to buy it when you had an opportunity, or else you parted with it through thoughtlessness.

Now it would be a sad thing for us to see a poor, distressed beggar, who is really in need of bread to eat, and for us to have no bread to give him—no money to buy it with. But would it not be just as sad a thing for you to have a companion or a younger child ask you to tell them about the truth as it is in Jesus, and then for you to feel that you had neglected many opportunities of learning about that Saviour, and so could not give the inquiring one the good instruction needed? This would surely be sad, to have a spiritually hungry one apply to you, and you have no “bread of life” to give them.

The more of good truth then you lay in, the more of scriptural truth you obtain, the better able will you be to fulfil the duty, and enjoy the happy privilege of giving to them who are in need.

Do you remind me that you are commanded not to sell the truth, and that therefore you must only procure it, and not part with it? I answer that, strange as it may seem at first, *yet there is such a thing as being able to give away*

something that you have, and yet keep it yourself. Let me illustrate this.

Suppose you have a dollar, and a poor, distressed person comes along, and makes out such a pitiable case that you give him your dollar. Now as you have given your money away, you no longer have it. The sufferer has a dollar, but you have none. Money, therefore, is not the thing that you can give away and still keep.

But suppose you have a light in the room with you—say a lighted candle by which you are reading—and some one comes in from another room and asks you for a light. You let such a person light his candle from your's and start off with it. Have you lost any thing by this? No! And who has light? Both of you! Now suppose fifty persons come and light their candles, and lamps, and tapers by your light, do you not give light to all these persons? And yet do you not keep your own? There they go, each one carrying his light in his hand, and yet your's is still on the table and burns as steadily as ever! There is something then that you can give away, and yet not part with it yourself, and that something is *light*. Now in this respect, as in others, *truth is light*.

Each one who reads or hears this, may be a torch of truth; and fifty persons may come and light their torches from your's, and fifty others may light their's from each one who gets light from you; and thus while you are giving away much, you are losing nothing. You impart light to others, and yet deprive not yourself of the good influences of the light.

And what a number of truth-lights might go forth from any one Sunday-school! As many as there are children in it. And they might give light to as many families as those children belong to. The truths the children carry home with them in their minds, and in their good books, are to give light in the household, or are to enable the children to give the light of a good example to all around. Thus you may enjoy the truth—you carry the truth about with you—you may give away its happy influences for the good of others, and yet obey the command of the Scriptures, "*and sell it not.*"

Fill up your minds with truth, then, children, and pour out and give to those who ask of you, or who are in need around you. Be yourselves, all of you, lamps of truth, in the consistent characters and good examples of your lives. "Buy the truth" wherever it is to be had, and

pay for it the price of attention or faithfulness that may be asked. Fill up your pitchers with truth's refreshing waters, that you may be able to give to the thirsty. Fill up your lamps—the lamps of your daily life—with truth's pure oil, that you may keep a steadily burning light, which shall reflect the glory of God, whose truth you display, and bring to your own hearts and the hearts of others, that good which a knowledge of spiritual truth is fitted to confer.

The Miners.

"If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."—Prov. ii. 4, 5.

"To California!" has been the cry for a few years past. And to California, hundreds and thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands have gone. And why? You know the reason. You know why young men and old men have left their homes and their friends in the East, and have gone to the shores on the far West of our land. They have gone in the search for gold. "Hid treasures," rich treasures, golden treasures lie in the river beds, and among the mountain gorges of California. These treasures men desire, and to gain possession of them, they go.

Gold is the thing desired. Gold is the magnet that draws thousands upon thousands of men toward it. Gold has more disciples than any thing else. Men will work harder for gold than for aught else. They will

take long journeys for it. They will overcome great difficulties in the hope of obtaining it. Men who, at home, will not handle a hoe or spade in the garden in order to have the ground bring forth beautiful flowers and useful fruits, will yet freely use the pick-axe, and the hammer, and the washer in California, in the toil for gold. Whole days and whole nights, whole months and whole years, they will search and labour and toil on for gold.

Oh what a wondrous power has the master gold! And how many, many slaves it has! And how diligently these slaves will work! They may not have decent clothes to wear, but what of that? say they! They may not have decent food to eat, but what of that? They want gold; so they will dig for it till their hands are blistered, and walk for it till their feet are sore and their strength well nigh exhausted, and they will seek for it until their eyes are nearly worn out in the search.

Many die in the work. But others are ready to take their places, and the work goes on. A few succeed early in filling their pockets with the "hid treasure," and then return to their friends. Others get much, but it seems to them but little compared with what they want, and

so they work on unsatisfied. While many—oh, how many!—toil on, year after year, finding only enough of the treasure to support them in life while they work. They get none to bring home. They get not enough with which to bring themselves home, and so they work, work on!

This is not a fancy picture, dear children. It is a true one. If you were in the gold region now, you would see its truth all around you. You would see poorly-clothed men, and poorly-fed men. You would see sick men, and almost dying men, working now in the sunshine, and anon in the rain, and all for gold. Some working to get it out of the sand; and some working to get it out of the rocks; and others working to get it away from those who from the sands and the rocks have obtained it.

Do you want to join them? Do you want to spend your days and your strength seeking and digging for gold? What say you? Do you want to turn miners, and with the pick and the spade dig all day, or dig all night for gold? We hope not. We hope you have not this gold-seeking fever, which carries so many away from the privileges of home, and carries so many down, all worn out, to an early grave! We do not want you to be idle. We do not

want you to be afraid of handling a spade if need be. But we do want you not to deem gold the *great* thing to be desired, the greatest thing to be sought after! For proper use, gold is worth properly seeking for. But gold is not the master to whom you, or any one else should be slaves for life. Gold mines are not the only mines worth digging in. Golden treasures are not the only treasures worth working for. You have strength, indeed, and you may use it. You should use it, and use it in work. But take care *how* you use it. Be careful as to *what* you work for, and *why* you work for it. There are treasures of greater value than gold, work for these. There are mines nearer home than California. In these you may have employment.

Just before you is a mine of knowledge. It is full of "hid treasures." Go to work in this mine, and work like men for these "hid treasures." Good books constitute an invaluable mine. Dig in it. Toil in it, and you may become rich in the rich treasures of learning. Some of the richest men in learning that the world now knows of, were once as poorly off, in this respect, as the poorest one among you. But they toiled in the mine of knowledge, they

toiled faithfully and perseveringly, and were, as you may be, most richly rewarded.

Are you an apprentice-boy! Well, if the trade or business you work at is an honest one, work on: it may be a mine for you which will yet one day make you rich. Suppose other boys, more favoured in some respects than you are, should sometimes laugh at you on account of the appearance of your clothes, or on account of your having to work so hard. Yet what of that? What cares the miner for a laugh? He can laugh too, and yet work on for his desired treasures. And so can you. And so should you. If you are disheartened on account of a sneer or laugh, "you are but a poor hand at the bellows," as the blacksmith would say. No, work on at your trade, or calling, determined to master it. Learn it well. Find out its hid treasures. *Now* you work for *it*. Soon, however, you may be able to make *it* work for *you*. Learn it well, therefore. Dig deep and work faithfully, and you shall not work in vain, for treasures worth the having may be had from the mine you are at work in.

Are you trying to earn something to aid in the support of a kind mother, or a dear young sister or brother, now in a measure dependent

upon you? Then work on. The mine of love is a rich mine, and full of "hid treasures" of great value. In working to aid others, you are working for yourself also, for you are enjoying the gratification of seeing others made more comfortable through your efforts. And this kind of gratification is not to be lightly esteemed. It is of great value. It is of *very* great worth. Helping others, is doing as our blessed Saviour did in an important particular. He came down to earth to help others. "He went about doing good," constantly doing good for others. He suffered and died for others. And he now lives as an intercessor for others. It is right, therefore, and honourable to help others, or our Divine Master would not have done it. And it has its rewards. Its rewards are treasures that you may enjoy. They consist in the affection of those you aid, in the approval of your own conscience, and in the smile of God. The Scriptures, when they command us to "do good and to distribute," add to the command, the words "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Whatever sacrifices we make, then, in seeking to promote the good of others, are well worth the making, for they are declared to be well pleasing in the sight of God. If, then, you

are working especially in the mine of kindness or love, work on. Toil on. Be not discouraged. You may not now enjoy all the returns for your labour that you may desire, but even in such a case you must not give up. You are doing good; so keep at it, and be assured that "in due season you shall reap, if you faint not."

But I have not yet told you what is the particular kind of treasure that the text encourages you to seek for. It is a most valuable treasure. It is a treasure which, like gold, will pass current anywhere. It is—listen now all, while I tell you—it is *heavenly wisdom*! It is worth having. It is worth working for. It is worth more than any thing else. If you have not this, no matter what else you have, you are poor. If you have this, no matter if you have not any thing else, you are rich. True wisdom, heavenly wisdom, is itself riches, great riches. Do you want these riches? Do you want them sufficiently to cause you to work for them? If you do, you can have them. But you cannot have them unless you are willing to work for them, any more than the miner can have gold without toiling for it. What do you say? Will you search for heavenly wisdom, which "is able to make you wise

unto salvation?" Are you ready to seek after those riches which endure unto everlasting life? If so, then are you miners indeed. You have the right spirit, the spirit that almost warrants you good success.

And here is the mine. It is a large mine. There is room enough within its limits for you all, and for all others who will engage. IT IS THE WORD OF GOD! Yes, this is the mine for you, *God's own word—his revealed will for your guidance and salvation.* This is the mine that young Timothy worked in. And he found much hid treasure there, and was made truly rich by what he there found. And hundreds of years before young Timothy's day, the Psalmist David, and his son King Solomon, searched in this same mine, nor searched in vain. They found much treasure in it—treasure of wisdom, that made them wiser than all their earthly teachers or companions. And the mine is even fuller now than it was in the days of young Timothy, or of King Solomon, or of the royal David. There is more in it for us than there was for either of them, for God has added treasures to it since their times on earth. Be encouraged then by the examples of those who have searched in this mine of

God's word and been greatly profited. If you will diligently search there, you shall be greatly profited. You have as much reason to expect to be benefited by the search as had Timothy, or Solomon, or David, or any one else. Hesitate not, then, but go to work. Only go to work in the right spirit—the spirit of humble, resolute determination to search until you find.

The mine is inexhaustible. Men have been searching in it during hundreds and thousands of years, and it will serve for whole generations of men to search in from this time unto the end of the world. Every one is invited to come and search for hid treasure in this mine of God's word. Does any one want to be made wise? Then let him come and search in this mine for some of its treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Does any one want to find treasures which will not perish in the using of them, but which will last for ever? Then let him come and dig in this mine. Here are to be found instruction and peace and love and joy; and if you obtain these precious treasures, you will have something that will last longer, and be of greater worth to you, than all the golden or silver treasures of earth. And there is no such thing as getting all the treasures out of

this mine of God's word. All the world might go to work in it, for it was designed for all the world, and it will be found that there is

“Enough for all; enough for each,
Enough—for evermore.”

But after all, children, there are a great many who profess to be working in this mine, who do not get any of its treasures. Now what is the reason? No doubt there are different reasons that influence them, and perhaps like reasons influence some who profess to be at work in the gold mine searching for its treasures. One man at the gold mine may be found lying down in the shade wherever he can find it. He is talking, or smoking, or telling stories, or sleeping. Any thing but *working*. And what is the matter with him? Is he sick? Yes. He has a disease known in California and in all other parts of the world, called *laziness*. The man is too lazy to work, and this is his only difficulty. But he can never get rich, so long as he will be idle or indolent. There may be riches all around him, and others may be getting their portions, but there is none for him, *if he will not work*. He may look about him a little as he walks around, or as he is lying down, but the gold does not lie on the surface

of the ground, and therefore is not to be picked up by the mere idle looker. But *there* is another man, who seems to be very busy. He is stirring around quite actively. We see him now in one place, and then in another, and in a few minutes in still another place, and in all of them he seems to be at work. But he has no golden treasures. What is the reason? He is not idle. The reason in his case is simply this, that he does not stand still long enough in any one place to find out what there is there. He digs down under the surface merely, and then impatiently hurries off to another place. In this way he may keep busy all the time and yet get nothing, *except weariness and pain.*

Now there are just such miners as these professing to be at work in the mine of God's word. There are some who are too indolent to study the word and thus really work in the mine. They have no true love for it, and so they prefer to be idling away the time. It is so with many children in regard to their Sunday-school lessons. They prefer to talk, or play, or sleep, or do almost any thing else, rather than go regularly to work in and at the lesson until its treasures are obtained. They have many privileges, in having their invaluable

Bibles, and their useful books of instruction and guidance as to the teachings of the Bible. But then all these things will not fill the mind with treasures of heavenly knowledge. There must be work. The scholar must make faithful use of his privileges, if he would be profited by them. It is not enough for the bee that there is sweetness in the flower—he must *go* to the flower and draw the sweetness out, or he will have no honey. And so with the miner. If he wants gold, he must dig for it, work for it, or he will not get it.

And so with you. If you want to be benefited by the privileges you have, you must make good use of them. If you want the treasures that are in your Bible, or other good books, you must “search for them.” You must not only have the book before you, but you must go *down into* it; that is, you must have your mind enter into the spirit and the truth of the words before you. Then will you find valuable treasures there.

Nor will it answer merely to spend much time over the word. You may be very busy with a Bible, and busy with it for a long time, and yet not gather any treasures from it. You are not

to be constantly turning over the leaves, trying to find a good place to dig, and so, in the search for a good place, not to be digging at all. Nor must you expect to find the rich treasures of heavenly truth all lying on the surface of the written word. No, these treasures are called "*hid* treasures," signifying that they must be *searched* for. You might read over page after page of the Holy Scriptures and yet not be at all benefited by your reading. You may indeed commit verse after verse to memory, so as to be able to recite them very perfectly, and yet not possess the treasures they contain—not know any thing about them. The treasures do not all lie on the surface. The mere words are not the treasures. The meaning, the sense, the gracious truths conveyed, these are the treasures. And if you want these, you must be willing to search for them.

You must look for them when you read. You must read carefully. You must read with the desire to know what God has revealed, or caused to be written for your instruction and comfort. If you read with a real desire to learn, then you will learn. If you have this desire, you will read carefully, perseveringly, and prayerfully.

And if you read thus, you will be profited greatly by it. If you work faithfully in the mine of God's word, (and you are working faithfully in it when you read it thoughtfully and prayerfully,) then you cannot fail to gather some of its rich treasures, for God himself tells each of you respecting this heavenly wisdom, "*If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*"

Oh then, young miners in the mine of God's word, work on! Work on faithfully, prayerfully. Fill up the store-house of your memory with the truths of God. Fill up your hearts with the treasures of his love. God's Holy Book is worth more, far more than all the other books in the world put together. It has more wisdom in it than they all have. It has richer treasures than can be found anywhere else. Treasures of knowledge, treasures of wisdom, treasures of grace. They are all here in the word divine. Search for them in faithfulness and prayer, and they shall be your's. And if they are your's, they will make you "wise unto salvation," rich unto eternal life.

Oh happy is the man who hears
Religion's warning voice,
And who celestial wisdom makes
His early, only choice.

For she has treasures greater far
Than East or West unfold;
More precious are her bright rewards
Than gems, or stores of gold.

Her right hand offers to the just
Immortal, happy days;
Her left, imperishable wealth
And heavenly crowns displays.

And as her holy labours rise,
So her rewards increase;
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.

Lingers.

"He lingered."—Gen. xix. 16.

OH how many scenes of misery and death these words explain! Many a man has lost his life, and thus brought much suffering upon many others, simply because "*he lingered.*"

Not long since a man hurried into a railroad depot as the train was about leaving. He ran toward the cars in which he wished to go, sprang for the platform of one of them, but fell, and was crushed to death! He had left his house in good time to have been quietly seated in the cars before their appointed time of starting; but on his way to the depot, meeting one and another, and talking with them, *he lingered.* The loss of his life and the sufferings of his afflicted family were the consequences of his lingering.

Many scholars have formed evil habits, lost credit in school, and perhaps also the benefit

of many days' instruction, simply because *they lingered*, and came late to school. Many a man has lost the obtaining of a position of value and usefulness, just because *he lingered* when he ought to have been diligently pressing on toward the mark for the prize he would have. And what is worse yet, many a sinner has fallen short of eternal life, in consequence of *lingering* in the matter of attention to the work of preparation for death and eternity.

Righteous Noah preached to thousands of men and women during the one hundred and twenty years that the ark was building. No doubt some of those who heard him discourse of the deluge that was to come, intended to make preparation for it; but they *lingered*, and the flood came upon them, and they were buried beneath its waters. Felix, the Roman governor to whom the Apostle Paul faithfully preached, was convinced of his duty, but would not at once engage in it. "He lingered," saying to the apostle, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." The lingering of Felix resulted (as we have every reason to believe) in his death without an interest in the Saviour whom Paul preached.

And just so it is with some—with many—every day. They hear of opportunities of instruction, and of gain in other respects, which, rightly improved, would be to their great advantage; but they *linger*, and the opportunities which pass away from them are perhaps made use of by others. And so also in the high and holy matters which belong to our spiritual and eternal welfare, men *hear* and *know* of their duty, but they *linger* and fall short of the fulfilment of it. And so, also, of the enjoyment of its rewards. How easy it is with some persons, both young and old, to *linger* and idle away their time! But they think not of the great injury they are thus doing to themselves. A very little more industry would put them far ahead of where they now are. A little more faithfulness to the duties belonging to them, would advance them rapidly in the esteem of those around them; more diligence would be for their great gain.

A shipping-merchant once employed as a clerk, a young man who came highly recommended to him. When about leaving the counting-house on the evening of the first day of the young man's engagement, the merchant said to him, "There is a large lot of goods in

the warehouse, that I want shipped, and the papers concerning them must be made out early in the morning. I wish you to attend to the matter, and shall expect to find you busily engaged in it, early in the morning, when I come down." When the merchant had left the store, the young man called the draymen together and made them promise to be at the store at an unusually early hour the next day, and all ready for active work. The next morning, as the merchant at his accustomed hour entered the counting-house, he found his new young clerk standing by the door looking over a newspaper. With a frown, he asked him "Why he was not at work, attending to the business intrusted to him?" The young man modestly replied, "The matter is all attended to, sir—the goods are shipped, and the papers, duly made out, are on your desk." It was even so, and that act showed a promptness and faithfulness in which the merchant felt that he could confide much. The young man's character was established, and his advancement was a sure and rapid one. This instance of prompt and willing service teaches us the worth of a like habit in every matter of duty. There is hardly any thing else equal to this

one characteristic of *prompt obedience*. It shows that you take an interest in what is given you to do, and that you have a regard for the wishes and feelings of those who have the care of you at home, or in school, or in business. It will gain for you a character worth the having. It will guard you against the character I once heard given of a boy, by his former master, who in speaking of him, said, "He was a clever sort of a boy in disposition, but in every thing I set him at, he lingered and loitered away so much time, that he was really of very little use to me, and gaining nothing useful to himself."

What a name to get! What merchant would want to employ as a clerk, or what teacher would want to receive as a scholar, one whose character could be summed up in the one word which might with propriety be written on his back as his name—"Lingerer?" Never, children, let this be the name of any one of you, as regards any of the duties that belong to you, or any of the privileges that are before you in life.

But, as I have already intimated, there are higher duties and happier privileges belonging to you than those which regard simply your relations in this life as children or scholars, or apprentices or clerks. I must remind you here

again of these things, and dwell a little upon them. We all have one Lord and Master—he who is declared to be “Our Father in heaven.” He gives us duties to perform. Are we active in them? or do we linger? How is it with you, dear children? Are you endeavouring to love the Lord with all your heart and soul and strength and mind? Do you each try to love your neighbour as yourself? It may be hard for you to do this. But should you give a thing up because it is hard to do, when you are yet bidden to do it by one in authority over you?

Come now, put your hearts to it and try. Try to love the Lord and keep his commandments! Do you say that you have tried, and yet have failed each time? Well, perhaps you have tried in your own weak strength alone. If so, no wonder that you have failed. I know that you are weak, that you are far too weak in your own unassisted strength, to keep the commandments of God and walk in his holy ways. But I know also that *you can have just as much strength as you need*, and that all you have to do to obtain it, is truly to ask for it and seek it. The Lord himself will give you strength to love and obey him. He promises to. He says to you, “*Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and*

ye shall find." If then you have any desire to love and obey him, as he offers to enable you to, what are you waiting for? God waits to be gracious. Why do you linger? Why not go right to him and tell him all that is in your heart, and ask him, in the name of his dear Son, to give you just the blessings you need to enable you to love and serve him aright? Ah! Do not linger! It may soon be too late for you to engage in any Christian duties or holy service, and your condemnation may be written in the brief, but all-expressive words, "He lingered." Beware of lingering! And "*whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*"

Nor are Christian matters only to be considered as *duties*, dear children. By no means. Only think what happy privileges lingerers forego! Is it not a gracious thing to be offered a happy home for ever in the bright world above? And the Lord Jesus offers this to you, if you will but put your trust in him as your Saviour, and love and serve him. Do you want to arrive in heaven at last? Why then linger? Why not now be found diligently journeying in the heavenly road? Have any of you begun to walk in it? Then journey on.

with a loving, thankful, devoted heart. Linger not—but, ever looking to Jesus for aid, seek to live close to him and to partake more and more of the enlightening and strengthening graces of the Holy Spirit.

Have you not yet *commenced* your journey in the heavenly way? How old are you? Can you read? Can you think? Can you decide for yourself in any matter? Why not then read and think and decide for yourself in the all-important matter of love to Jesus, and salvation by him?

It is ungrateful in you to linger.

If I should confer a great many favours upon you, and then offer to confer more and greater ones, would you feel no gratitude toward me? Would you linger when on the way to thank me for what I had done and what I had offered to do? I know you would not. Then why do you treat the Lord thus? He has blessed you from your birth up till this moment, and now he offers to make you his adopted child, and to give you a home with him in heaven. Have you then no gratitude for him? And if you have any, *where* is it? Why do you linger in showing it to him?

It is sinful to linger.

Jehovah says to you, "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*" If you fail to remember him and to render him a loving obedience, you are sinning against him.

It is most dangerous to linger.

This is your season of gospel privileges. Now the Sunday-school is your's, with all its gracious opportunities of learning of Jesus and of heaven; and now the church opens her doors to receive you, and invites and urges you to enter and partake of her means of grace. These days, my dear young friends, are your golden days. Yes, "*Now,*" for you, "*is the accepted time; now is, indeed, the day of salvation!*" Called now, ye young immortal beings, to run the race of life, run on in the way of God's commandments. Linger not, lest the race be over, and others gain a prize while you are left to mourn over your folly and sin. Remember Lot's wife. When urged to escape to the mountains—to escape for her life—she lingered, looked back, and being turned into a pillar of salt, she became a standing monument of the folly and danger of all lingerers in the path of duty. So with the five foolish virgins of whom our Lord tells us. They lingered in the matter of procuring oil for their lamps, and the result

was, that when they arrived, "the door was shut," and they sought an entrance, but all in vain. Dear young friends, let it not be so with any of you. Duty calls you. Linger not!

Happy privileges now open invitingly before you. Linger not! Give your hearts and your lives to the Saviour now. Seek his Spirit daily. Strive to live as he would have you live, and he will renew your strength, that here, in the way of his commandments, you "may run and not be weary, walk and not faint;" and then hereafter he will take you to himself, to dwell with him in the happy land where the Christian racer gets his prize, the Christian soldier his crown, and all the faithful their "great reward."

Watchmen.

“*Watch.*”—Mark xiii. 37.

EVERY one ought to be a watchman; for every one has something to watch. Boys can watch, and girls can watch. And they are commanded to do so, for the Saviour, when telling his disciples to watch, said also, “*What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!*” This word *watch* is the text from which I am now to address you. It is short, so that you can easily remember it.

We want you all, dear children, to engage as watchmen; therefore we shall tell you something about what you are to watch against, and something about the time for watching, and something about the proper manner of watching. We may thus make three divisions of the text; and as the text is of but one word, we will make the divisions also each of one word.

We have then for the text—*Watch!*

And for the divisions or particular points to speak to you about, we have :—

1. What?

2. When?

3. How?

And now, first, What? What are you to watch against? Would it not be all folly for a man to spend his time watching the sun, for fear it would fall down upon him? Is it worth while for a watchman to stay and watch an empty house, to see who will come out of it? “By no means,” you are quite ready to answer. But now suppose that you were walking under a loose embankment, would it not be well for you to watch it? Or suppose that there was a house in the city or village or neighbourhood you live in, which was known to be inhabited by robbers, would it not be well to have that house closely watched, that those coming out of it might be seen and known, and, in due time, taken up and punished.

You are no doubt quite ready to answer “Yes,” to these last questions; and therefore we say to each one of you, *watch!* When you are walking or playing with a companion who takes God’s holy name in vain, or

who is known to be dishonest, *watch!* Do you not see the loose embankment just ready to fall on you? Look up! God says, "*Walk not in the way of the ungodly.*" Hence, every moment you willingly stay in the company of such, you are in danger of bringing down God's heavy displeasure upon you. Does a companion ever try to persuade you to do some evil thing—such as to stay away from Sunday-school, or break God's holy day, or disobey your parents? If so, *watch!* You know he is enticing you to do wrong, and you must remember that God says to you, "*My son, when sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*"

But where is the house you are particularly to watch, knowing that it has some evil inmates? It is close by. You have not far to look for it. It is just at hand. It is *within you*. It is called "*the heart.*" Oh! out of the heart proceed many evil things! And this is what each one is to watch, even *his own* heart. Now, do not think that this is but a very easy and trifling matter. To do it well, I think you will find out that there is required a good deal of time, and of close attention. The evil inmates of the heart get out of it in various ways, all of which you are to guard, that you may slay the inhabit-

ants as they pass out. Sometimes they run up from the heart and get out of the mouth in the form of evil words. Watch, then! Bite them as they pass out, children, if you cannot really choke them down and smother them out of existence. Watch against evil thoughts originating in your hearts, and watch against evil words getting out from you to do injury to yourselves and others.

Sometimes, all in a passion, a boy is found with the evil inhabitants of the heart running out through the clenched fists and the feet, in the form of cuffs and kicks, which the boy, all in anger, is giving to his fellow, against whom he is so sinfully angry. Watch, children, against any such manifestations or out-goings as those!

Keep your eyes open to see what kinds of things come out of your heart; and evil things, whether words or deeds, watch against, as you value peace here and happiness hereafter. In fabled story we read of a many-headed monster called the "Hydra," which Hercules is said to have killed. It is represented as a most fearful animal, because possessed of so many heads. Cut one head off, and there were many left. Indeed it seemed to have heads all over it!

Now, children, what is thus merely a made-up

story respecting an animal of former days, is yet very true as a description of an enemy which you have constantly to watch against, or be overcome by. There is indeed a fearful hydra, who has lived for thousands of years, and who in that time has caused the destruction of many—oh, how many!—both young and old, of every nation and kindred and people and tongue! And now he is as destructive as ever he was. And *you* are warned against him. Holy Scripture puts you on your guard respecting this fearful hydra, when it says to you, "*Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith.*"

This, then, is what you are to watch against. Watch against the temptations of Satan, trying to lead you into captivity to his will. Watch against all sin, for in whatever form it may appear, it is a head of the hydra monster, Satan. Your temptations are many. You are tempted to give way to a passionate temper; again, you are tempted to use unholy language; at another time you are tempted to an act of disobedience to your parents or teachers. Now these are but some of the different forms of sin, or some

of the different heads of the same hydra monster. Do not give up in despair because when you cut off one head another appears! It is just what you must expect. You are foretold, and so forewarned. But you must not give up or draw back. You are told how to conquer, in the words, "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" Sometimes temptations will assail you like open enemies, and try to *force you* to yield. And sometimes they will come disguised as friends, and try begging or persuading you to yield. But you are to withstand them all. You must be on the watch, be ready for them; and remember, if you conquer once, you can do it much easier the next time; and if you yield once, it will be a great deal harder another time to keep from yielding. Watch, therefore. Watch against sin in whatever form it may assail you. It is your enemy, your great enemy. Be on your guard therefore against the power of sin.

But we must say something about the *time* for watching. This comes under the second division, or point to be considered, viz. *When?*

When are you to watch against sin, dear children? On one day, and not on another? In one hour, but not the next? In some one

particular temptation, but not in the half-a-dozen others which may follow it? How is this, children? *When* are you to watch? The word of God tells us. It says, in the language of the Apostle Paul to Timothy: "*Watch thou in all things.*" There is no exception made here. Timothy was commanded, and so you are commanded, to "watch in all things." You must watch when you get up in the morning lest you forget to thank God for taking care of you through the night. You must watch when bidden to do any thing by your parents or teachers, lest you act or speak improperly about it. You must watch when with your companions; watch when at home; watch when at school; watch when at work; watch when at play. You must watch to-day, and you must watch to-morrow; and not in any one particular thing only, but "*in all things.*"

And do you ask why you must thus be watching all the time, in all things? The answer is, because your adversary is on the watch all the time, ready to take advantage of your carelessness. He attacks you when you are at home, and when you are at school, when you are alone, and when you are surrounded by associates. He suits the character of his

attack or temptation to the circumstances in which he finds you. It is one kind of temptation in the morning, and many other kinds, probably, during the day and evening. Your temper is tried, your pride is tempted, or your honesty and truthfulness are put to the test. In these and other ways temptations appear, or sin makes attacks upon you. Now to be on the watch is one half, at least, in the matter of overcoming temptation.

If on the watch when temptations assail you, you give the alarm to all your powers of body and soul, and they rally, or unite together in your defence. Watchmen are poor affairs if they go to sleep every little while, whether they take their naps in their watch-boxes, or sitting on the curb-stone, or leaning against a lamp-post. When they are expected to be on watch, they have no business to be asleep, for thus they expose to danger whatever is intrusted to their watchfulness.

And you, boys, and you, girls, have each of you intrusted to your care that which is of more value than all the gold and silver of earth. You have each of you an immortal soul to be trained for heaven, or to be left in hopeless misery hereafter. And sin seeks

the destruction of your soul. Every sin does it some injury. Therefore we repeat to each of you, in regard to the *time* for watching, "*Watch thou* IN ALL THINGS!" But for you, as young Christian watchmen, we have now a third point to consider, and that is, *How*?

How? or in what manner are you to watch? This is important for you. Suppose I should take a little girl that knew not how to read, and should take pains to tell her just *what* to read, and just *when* to read, but should not teach her *how* to read. Do you think she would make out very well? But you are not as bad off as that, dear children. You not only know how to read, but to some extent, at least, you know how to watch. You may go to one school to learn one thing, and to another school to learn other things, but you come to Sunday-school chiefly to learn *how to watch*. We want to make watchmen of you. We want you to become good watchmen over yourselves—over your own thoughts, words and actions. Here you are instructed as to how to watch, because here especially you are told of the nature and character of your enemy, and of the source of your true strength, and of the necessity of being ever guarded. Here you are to get

wisdom from the words of Divine truth, and thus both be taught how to watch, and also be strengthened for faithful watching. If you should turn now to the 13th verse of the 16th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, you could read these words of the apostle: "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*"

And the words are full of meaning. "Watch ye;" that is, ever be on the look-out that you are not led into sin unawares. "*Stand fast in the faith;*" that is, be true to what God says; do just as his word tells you to; do nothing that it forbids. "Quit you like men;" that is, be resolute, do not be afraid to show that you desire to honour the Lord. "Be strong," or, be firm; do not give up to temptation. Do not yield, and thus show that you are very weak, but act like courageous men, valiant for their Master. Thus you are to watch with courage and with resolution—with courage, that when you see the enemy attacking you in temptation, you give not up in fear, or in weakness; and watch with resolution to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

But this leads me to bring before you one

more direction as to *how* you must watch. The direction I now refer to is found in the 14th chapter of the Gospel according to Mark, and the 38th verse, and reads thus:

“Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”

Yes, dear children, to be useful watchmen over yourselves, you must pray for heavenly strength. “*Watch and pray!*” They are here coupled together. You ought not to separate them. How can a man watch that has no eyes? Or how can he watch a thing if his eyes are shut? Now, if you try to watch against sin without prayer, you have your eyes shut, and will not really see the monster sin, until you are in his power. Prayer is your eye-sight. It is your strength—or it gives you these things. It helps you to see your duty and it helps you to discharge that duty aright. So as you watch, also *pray*, my young friends. God hears the simplest form of prayer that is offered up in the name of Jesus. He will hear *your* prayers, if offered up in simple trust in his promises through grace in Christ Jesus. He will help you to watch over your own hearts and lives. He will strengthen you to be faithful to him and to yourselves, if you truly ask of

him the help and strength you need. Jesus the Saviour loves you. He gave himself to redeem and save you from the power and curse of sin. He now watches over you. He sees your every deed. He knows your every thought. He hears your every word.

Does he see you trying to love and serve him? Does he see you watchful over your thoughts, words, and deeds? Or does he see you careless of him, and of your own highest good? How is this with you? Oh, I hope he sees *some* of you, at least, trusting in his gracious merits for your acceptance with heaven, and also watchful over yourselves that sin shall not have dominion over you!

The Holy Spirit is the help you need. It will be given to those who ask for it in Jesus' name. You, therefore, must *ask*. You must watch, and you must pray. You all need to have your sins forgiven. You all need to be the adopted and renewed children of God, keeping his holy will and commandments, and walking in the same all the days of your life. This is done by trust in Jesus—by prayer to Jesus—by loving and serving him. And if this is done, you will all finally be taken home to him in heaven—to that home of which you sing:

Oh, that will be joyful !
To meet to part no more—
To meet to part no more,
On Canaan's happy shore,
And sing the everlasting song
With those who've gone before.

Therefore, dear children, what I say to one,
I say to all— *Watch!* And may the Holy Spirit
watch over and bless you all, now and ever, for
Jesus' sake. Amen.



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